

CONVENT SCHOOLS (IRELAND).

RETURN to an Order of the Honorable The House of Commons,
dated 26 February 1864;—for,

COPIES "of a REPORT made to the Board of National Education, on the
subject of CONVENT SCHOOLS in *Ireland*, by Inspector *Sheridan*;"

"And, of a LETTER or MEMORIAL to the Board of National Education from
Baggot Street Convent School, *Dublin*, applying for Payment for TRAINING
TEACHERS; and of the ANSWERS of the Board thereto."

Office of National Education, }
Dublin, 16 March 1864. }

JAMES KELLY, }
WILLIAM MCCREEDY, } Secretaries.

(*Sir Hugh Cairns.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
6 April 1864.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I.—Copy of Head Inspector Sheridan's General Report, for the year 1860	- 3
II.—Copy of Letter dated 21 December 1863, from Mrs. Norris, Superior of the Convent, Baggot Street, Dublin	- - - - - 46
Copy of Letter, dated 4 January 1864, from the Commissioners of National Education, in reply to the application from Mrs. Norris	- - 47

COPIES of a REPORT made to the Board of National Education on the Subject of CONVENT SCHOOLS in *Ireland*, by Inspector *Sheridan*: And, of a LETTER or MEMORIAL to the Board of National Education, from Baggot Street Convent School, *Dublin*, applying for payment for TRAINING TEACHERS, and of the ANSWERS of the Board thereto.

— I. —

GENERAL REPORT for the year 1860, upon the State and Prospects of National Education, in Districts 51-60, by *John E. Sheridan*, Head Inspector of National Schools.

Gentlemen,

1. I HAVE the honour to present, for the information of the Commissioners, this my General Report for the past year, upon the state and prospects of National Education in the group of school districts which are under my charge, and which are situate in the south-west of Ireland, comprising, as stated in my former reports, the entire of the county Kerry, the greater part of the counties of Cork and Limerick, and portions of the counties of Tipperary, Waterford, Clare, and Kilkenny, an area of about 6,000 square miles.

2. I shall commence with an analysis of the occupation of my time, and a general statement of the official work done by me during the year 1860. The duties attached to the office of Head Inspector of National Schools are very numerous, of a very miscellaneous character, and all highly important in their bearing upon the efficient working of the system. They are duties which must be discharged by somebody, as being essentially necessary; and although they render a Head Inspector's life anything but pleasurable, and his office anything but a sinecure, leaving him but scanty time for study, recreation, or private business, and obliging him to spend a considerable portion of each year far away from his family and friends, I can conscientiously affirm that in my opinion there is not one of these duties that could be discharged with equal efficiency by any other than the Head Inspector. The most important are the following:—

I. *The Inspection of Schools*.—To this duty I devoted 110 days during the past year; and in that time I visited 171 ordinary National Schools (which occupied me for 79 of the 110 days), and conducted the annual examinations of the pupils of the Dumanway, Cleonard, and Limerick District Model Schools (which engrossed the remaining 31 days). In the 79 days devoted to the inspection of ordinary National Schools, I fully examined 104, and partially examined 54. The remaining 13 were closed when I visited them.

II. *The Revising of Teachers' and Paid Monitors' Written Exercises, and the Examining and Classifying of Teachers*.—To this duty I devoted 53 days, within which time I revised 443 written exercises, each exercise embracing from five to 12 different subjects, and examined orally, with the aid of the District Inspectors, and classified 195 teachers in 22 distinct groups.

III. *The Writing of Annual Reports and Reports of Inquiries*.—To this duty I was obliged to devote 89 days. I wrote a general report upon the state of education in the south-west of Ireland during 1859, reports upon the working of the Dumanway, Cleonard, and Limerick District Model Schools, and also reports of three or four special investigations held by me in the course of 1860.

These three items make up 209 days, which, with (a) 52 Sundays, (b) 52 Saturdays set apart for ordinary official correspondence, (c) 32 days devoted to special duties, such as investigations, preparing questions for the written examinations of teachers and monitors, occasional visits to Model Schools, &c. &c., (d) 13 days occupied in travelling long distances, and (e) six days on duty in the Education Office make a total of 357 days, leaving only nine days (including holidays), on which I was off duty during the year 1860, on four of which I was prevented by illness from attending to business.

3. In this report I propose to lay before the Commissioners all the most interesting information I have been able to gather, both from my own note-books and from the Annual Reports of the District Inspectors, under the five following heads:—I. School-houses; II. Schools; III. Teachers; IV. Pupils; V. Inspections; and in the Appendix I will give such extracts from the Annual Reports of the District Inspectors as will make the

Commissioners fully acquainted with the views of these gentlemen, regarding several of the most important features of National Education in their respective districts.

I.—SCHOOL-HOUSES.

4. The points upon which it is most material that the Commissioners should be furnished with accurate information regarding National School-houses, are obviously these:—

- (a.) Their suitability for school purposes.
- (b.) Their state of repair.
- (c.) The amount of accommodation they afford.

Now, what are the characteristics of a suitable school-house? Taking the most moderate view of the matter, I should say that a school-house, to be suitable, (1) should be capable of conveniently accommodating the largest daily attendance which the locality is likely to furnish; (2) should be dry and comfortable, well lighted, and well ventilated; and (3) should be provided with suitable play ground and out-offices. Assuming that these three things are necessary to constitute a suitable school-house, how many of the National School-houses in the 10 districts under my superintendence may be pronounced suitable? I cannot answer this question with any degree of precision, because in the Annual Reports of the District Inspectors, who, from being the only persons intimately acquainted with the school-houses in their respective districts, are alone competent to give correct information on the subject, the school-houses are classified, not according to *suitability*, nor yet according to *state of repair*, but according to both combined. Now it is evident that "*suitability for school purposes*" is one thing, and "*state of repair*" quite a different thing, and that, although of course not incompatible, they may exist separately. A school-house, regarded simply as a building constructed for a special purpose, may be suitable, and yet be in want of some repairs; and on the other hand, a school-house may be in excellent repair, and yet owing to faulty construction, utterly unsuitable for school purposes. The classification of school-houses, therefore, as given in the Inspectors' Annual Reports, falls in the important essential of perspicuity and precision; and this is a defect, which, I respectfully submit, ought to be carefully avoided in their future reports. To this end, it would be strictly necessary to distinguish "school-houses" from "schools," inasmuch as in the same school-house there are often two, and sometimes three distinct schools. In short, I take it that what the Commissioners require to know is—

- (a.) How many distinct school-houses or school-buildings there are in each district.
- (b.) How many of these are *suitable*, regarded merely as buildings intended for school purposes.
- (c.) How many of them are in a good or fair state of repair.

On those points the District Inspectors' Annual Reports do not furnish precise information.

5. It appears from them, however, that as regards "*building, repairs, &c.*," out of the total number of schools in the 10 districts,

59·8 per cent.	are Good,
22·2	" Fair,
14·	" Middling, and
4·	" Bad.

Now, if it be really meant that out of every 100 school-houses in these 10 districts, 82 are both well or fairly adapted for school purposes, and in good or fair state of repair, nothing, humanly speaking, could be more satisfactory. But as my experience leads me to a very different conclusion, I am forced to believe, either that I have not correctly apprehended what the District Inspectors intend to convey by their classification of school-houses, or that their ideas of "*suitability*" differ very materially from mine. What mine are I have already explained; and I feel bound to state it as my opinion, not only that a very small proportion of the non-vested school houses can properly be described as suitable, but that even of the vested class there are not a few, particularly such as were erected many years ago, which are almost equally unfitted to the distinction. The more modern vested school houses are a vast improvement upon the older ones, having been constructed upon more correct principles, and being much more attractive and tasteful in external appearance. In one most important particular those which have been erected within the last five or six years are infinitely superior. I refer to out-offices or privies. I think I may safely assert that it is only since the architectural department of our system was transferred to the Board of Public Works, that these indispensable appendages to schools have received due attention. In such of those, planned and erected by the Board of Works, as I have visited, I have found the privies sufficiently roomy and well-ventilated, and so constructed as to be easily kept in order. I cannot recollect, on the other hand, having ever visited one of those previously erected, in which the privies were not so constructed, so low in the roof, and generally so badly constructed as to render it extremely difficult to keep them clean; and as the teachers are held responsible for the state of these offices, it very commonly happens that they keep them constantly locked, except on the occasions of the Inspector's visits.

6. Throughout the entire of my circuit of districts, the school managers and others interested in the progress of popular education, are anxiously awaiting the fulfilment of the promise made by the Chief Secretary for Ireland in the last session of Parliament, that the Board would revert to the old practice of contributing aid towards the erection of school-houses to be vested in Trustees. I have not the smallest doubt that if this practice be revived, and the Government will supply the necessary funds, a very large proportion of the really unsuitable houses will have been superseded within a few years, and their places supplied by decent and commodious school-buildings. While, however, I fully share in anticipation of good results from a re-adoption of the old vesting principle, I feel it incumbent on me, as a faithful servant of the Board, to repeat here the warning which I took the liberty of giving in one of my Reports of last year, that it will be expedient for the Commissioners, before committing themselves again to the principle of vesting school premises in Trustees, to fix upon such conditions as will secure that the buildings erected in accordance with that principle shall be kept in proper repair. It is unnecessary for me to remind them how many of the school-houses formerly vested in Trustees have been allowed to fall into ruins; how many others are in a discreditable state of repair, and how inefficacious have been the repeated remonstrances and warnings upon the subject addressed to the Trustees by the Commissioners. I have myself given a good deal of thought to the matter, which I look upon as of the highest importance, and what I would respectfully recommend is this:—

(a.) That such school premises should be vested, in each case, in three Trustees.

(b.) That the applicant for aid should be one, the proprietor of the site another, and the Board of National Education in its corporate capacity, or one of its Secretaries for the time being, the third Trustee.

(c.) That when the proprietor of the site, or his agent, is the applicant for aid, another solvent and respectable party should be nominated as second Trustee.

(d.) That the Board of National Education, as third Trustee, should take upon itself the responsibility of keeping the school-buildings in proper repair.

The last condition is of course the cardinal one. I should not think of proposing it, were it possible to devise any other means of keeping the school-houses in repair; but after giving the matter the fullest consideration, I feel entirely convinced that if the Board will not take upon itself this responsibility, not only will the school-houses not be kept in proper repair, but that the Commissioners will entail on themselves and their officers endless trouble and annoyance in trying to induce or coerce the Trustees to discharge their duty in this respect. It is a question, indeed, whether it will not be very difficult to find solvent respectable parties willing to act as Trustees, if their doing so will impose upon them the obligation of keeping the school-buildings in repair at their own expense.

7. There is one other point in connexion with school-buildings to which I would respectfully invite the Commissioners' attention. I allude to the advantage, in some cases, of contributing aid towards, or otherwise encouraging, the erection of teachers' residences contiguous to the school-houses. I say, "in some cases," because I do not consider it necessary or even desirable in all cases. On the contrary, the cases in which such provision appears to me desirable, are exceptional and comparatively few, but yet sufficiently numerous to merit the benevolent consideration of the Commissioners. In his Annual Report for 1859, Mr. Macnamera, the Inspector of the Kilkenny District, has the following remarks, which I can testify, are not only true of his own district, but more or less applicable to every one of the other nine districts with which I am connected.

"A source of discontent to many teachers in this district is the great want in their respective localities of reasonably comfortable lodging accommodation. About 30 teachers are in this respect most inconveniently circumstanced. Their schools are principally in the more remote mountain localities, in which the only domestic dwellings are those of the mountain farmers and labourers. In every domestic appointment, as well as in structure, these dwellings are uncomfortable and inconvenient; and yet it is with difficulty, and with much uncertainty as respects tenure, that a teacher can engage a narrow, smoky, wretchedly furnished apartment in one of these mountain cabins, which may be situated two or three miles from the school, or even so far as five miles. Domesticated thus with persons of a very inferior class, these teachers must largely share their ways of life and social standing."

Nay more, it is equally true that "domesticated thus," they must be prevented, by the very circumstances of their social position, from improving their minds by private study, or of exercising that forethought and reflection which are so necessary to the efficient discharge of their duties in the school-room. The condition of such teachers is wretched indeed, and as I have already said, is well deserving the sympathy and benevolent consideration of the Commissioners. It strikes me that if, when application is made for aid towards building a school-house in a locality where decent lodging for the teacher is not procurable within a reasonable distance of the intended school, the Commissioners were to offer to bear the entire expense of building and fitting-up the school-house on the condition that the local parties should erect at their own expense a suitable residence for the teacher,

teachers, it would effect in a few years, without any exorbitant outlay, a gratifying amelioration of the condition of this most unhappy class of national teachers. In his Annual Report for 1860, Mr. Robinson, the Inspector of the Newcastle District, has made some remarks upon this subject, which will be found in the Appendix, and which appear to me well worthy of attention.

8. As regards the amount of accommodation which the existing school-houses are capable of affording, it appears from the returns furnished by the District Inspectors that—

21.0 per cent.	are capable of accommodating	not more than 50 pupils.
35.7	"	from 50 up to 75 "
27.2	"	from 75 up to 100 "
9.1	"	from 100 up to 150 "
7.0	"	above 150 "

In five districts the school accommodation is described by the Inspectors as generally sufficient for the attendance; in the remaining five districts it is described as generally inadequate. The remarks of the District Inspectors in reference to this subject will be found in the Appendix.

II.—SCHOOLS.

9. *Number and Class of Schools.*—In the ten districts under my charge there were in actual operation, at the close of the year 1860, the following schools:—

(a.) District Model Schools (Departments)	-	-	-	-	-	11
(b.) Workhouse Schools	-	-	-	-	-	30
(c.) Convent Schools	-	-	-	-	-	36
(d.) Gael Schools	-	-	-	-	-	3
(e.) Evening Schools	-	-	-	-	-	5
(f.) Ordinary Town and Rural Schools	-	-	-	-	-	805
TOTAL						890

At the close of 1859 the total number of schools in actual operation was 878; there was therefore an increase of 12 in the course of 1860. In addition to the 890 schools above referred to, there were on the several district books the names of 37 non-operation schools—that is, either schools temporarily suspended, or schools towards the building of which the Commissioners have made grants, but which are not yet ready for the reception of pupils; making a total of 927 schools, which number is greater by 15 than the number returned at the close of 1859.

In reference to the 11 departments of District Model Schools given above, it may be necessary to explain that the Limerick District Model School comprises five distinct departments, all in actual operation, namely, a boys' school, a girls' school, an infant school, an agricultural school, and a navigation school; the Clonmel Model School, three departments: a boys' school, a girls' school, and an infant school; and the Dumanaway Model School, two departments: a boys' school, and a girls' school. Of the projected District Model School at Cork, only one department is at present in existence, namely, the Model Agricultural School. This establishment has been in operation since August 1859, and is doing well. The working of the other District Model Schools has been made, as usual, the subject of a separate Report, to which I beg to refer the Commissioners for all necessary information.

10. *Schools, how held.*—It appears from the Reports of the District Inspectors, that of the aggregate number of 927 National Schools in the ten districts, 178 are vested in the Commissioners, 205 are vested in Trustees, and 544 are non-vested. The number returned as "vested in the Commissioners" in 1859 was 169.

11. *State of Schools as to Furniture and Apparatus.*—Under this head the District Inspectors report very favourably. I gather from their returns that in respect of "furniture and apparatus"—

Per cent.

56.6	of the total number of Operation Schools in the ten districts are in a good state.
25.6	" " " " " fair state.
14.3	" " " " " middling state.
3.7	" " " " " bad state.

It appears from this that 88 out of every 100 schools are well or fairly supplied with desks, forms, book-presses, clocks, maps, charts, diagrams, black-boards, &c. In 1859 the corresponding per-centage was 76.

The District Inspectors, almost without exception, bear testimony in their reports to the immense amount of good effected in this direction, by the liberality of a single individual, Vere Foster, Esq., whose extraordinary munificence has not only spread itself over a vast area, but has conferred real substantial benefit in each particular case. Let the traveller go where he will throughout my group of districts, whether to schools situate in populous and

and wealthy cities and towns, or to those situated in the poorest villages, on the roadsides, or in localities out of the way, neglected, and absolutely unknown to the general public, he will find ample evidence of this gentleman's philanthropy and beneficence.

12. *State of Schools as to Supply of Requisites.*—By "requisites" are meant school-books, slates, copies, &c., which are sold by the Commissioners to pupils of National Schools at very reduced rates; and it is to be understood that those schools only are to be considered as in a satisfactory state as regards "supply of requisites," in which (a) the children in actual attendance are found supplied with the necessary requisites, and (b) the teachers have on hand a sale-stock sufficient to meet the contingent wants of their schools. It is quite right and necessary that these two conditions should be enforced, because it were just as rational to expect a teacher to work his school efficiently without a proper supply of requisites, as to expect a mechanic to perform the business of his trade without a suitable stock of tools.

It is gratifying to learn from the Reports of the Inspectors that the schools in their respective districts were in general well or fairly supplied with the necessary requisites during 1860. There are two exceptions, however. Mr. Shreeky, the Inspector of the Cork District, reports, that of 102 operation schools under his charge, 25 were *well* supplied, 48 *fairly*, 22 *moderately*, and 7 *badly*; and he adds that the value (according to the reduced scale of prices) of the ordinary requisites purchased during 1860, by 82 town and rural schools, was 232*l.* 10*s.*, giving an average of only 5*l.* 1*s.* 7*d.* for each school or of only 1*s.* 1*d.* for each pupil in average daily attendance (for he returns 56 as the average daily attendance on ordinary town and rural schools.) Mr. Robinson, the Inspector of the Newcastle District, reports most unfavourably under this head. His remarks, which are well worthy of perusal, will be found in the Appendix. In his district there were 93 schools in operation in 1860, commanding an average daily attendance of 60 pupils per school, and he states that the value of requisites purchased during the year by these schools was only 185*l.* 13*s.* This gives an average of about 2*l.* 2*s.* 1*d.* per school, and of about 8½*d.* per pupil in average daily attendance.

Now, I must say, in justice to these two gentlemen, that their districts are the very last from which I should have expected an unfavourable report regarding the supply of requisites in the schools, because I am aware that they have given special attention to the subject, and have been indefatigable in their exertions to secure at all times an adequate supply of books and other necessities for their schools; and I will add, that I do not believe that their districts are in reality more unfavourably circumstanced in this respect than those of their colleagues, or that in point of fact the supply of requisites in their schools is as unsatisfactory as they imagine.

I have been led to devote a good deal of thought to this question, and have arrived at a definite conclusion respecting it; and as I am sensible that a great amount of misapprehension prevails in the public mind, and even in the minds of many of the inspectors regarding it, I take this opportunity of stating the conclusion I have arrived at, and of explaining, as briefly as possible, the considerations which have led me to that conclusion. As far as I can learn, the question has never been fully investigated, and very erroneous views of the subject are in consequence commonly entertained. When the public are informed that each pupil in daily attendance at National Schools expends on an average each year not more than 1*s.*, or perhaps 6*d.*, in the purchase of books and other necessary requisites, the public, knowing how little could be purchased for 1*s.* or 6*d.* in an ordinary bookseller's or stationer's shop, are very apt to jump to the conclusion that the children attending National Schools must be for the most part miserably in want of the indispensable instruments for acquiring knowledge. Now if this conclusion were legitimate, it would follow that our hopes of the progress of education and enlightenment amongst the people are utterly delusive. I have satisfied myself, however, and I think I can prove to others, that such is not the case.

It will be admitted, by all who are conversant with the ordinary course of instruction in National Schools, that to enable the pupils to obtain a competent knowledge of the subjects prescribed for each class in the National School programme, the following requisites are *absolutely necessary* :—

For each *Third or Fourth Class* pupil, a Reading or Lesson Book (price 3*d.*), a Spelling Book (price 3½*d.*), an Arithmetic (price 4*d.*), a Grammar and Geography (price 5*d.* each), a slate (price 1*d.*), and (say) six writing copies as a sufficient supply for one year (price 6*d.*); total cost, 1*s.* 11½*d.*

For each *Second Class* pupil, a Lesson Book (price 2*d.*), a Spelling Book (price 3½*d.*), a First Book of Arithmetic (price 1½*d.*), a Grammar and Geography (price 3*d.* each), a slate (price ½*d.*), and as a supply for one year, six copies (price 6*d.*); total cost, 1*s.* 7½*d.*

For each *Second Class* pupil, a Lesson Book (price 1½*d.*), a slate (price ½*d.*), and an Arithmetic Table-Book (price ½*d.*); total cost, 2½*d.*

For each *First Class* pupil a Lesson Book (price ½*d.*), and a slate (price ½*d.*); total cost, 1½*d.*

It appears thus, that owing to the very reduced rates at which the Commissioners sell

sell school requisites to the pupils of their own schools, a supply *fully adequate* to the wants of an entire year may be purchased—

	s.	d.
(a.) By a Fourth Class pupil for - - - - -	1	11½
(b.) By a Third Class pupil for - - - - -	1	11½
(c.) By a Sequel Class pupil for - - - - -	1	7½
(d.) By a Second Class pupil for - - - - -	-	2½
(e.) By a First Class pupil for - - - - -	-	1½
TOTAL - - - - -	5	10½

This gives an average of 1s. 2d. per pupil, which is obviously the reasonable outlay that is necessary. I take no amount of expenditure for pens, ink, and slate-pencils, because these requisites, when not supplied gratuitously in the schools, are for the most part purchased elsewhere by the pupils.

Now let us consider under what circumstances an average annual outlay of 1s. 2d. per pupil for the purchase of requisites, would be necessary. Clearly, it would be necessary only under the two following conditions:—

1. That the several classes should comprise the same number of pupils each.
2. That each pupil should require an entire new supply of requisites each year.

If for instance, every 100 pupils in average daily attendance were found classified in five classes of 20 pupils each, and if each pupil necessarily required an entire fresh supply of requisites each year, the average annual outlay that should be incurred would be just 1s. 2d. per pupil.

But it is well known that such are not the circumstances of our schools. Everybody at all conversant with the working of National Schools must be aware that, taking one school with another, every 100 pupils in daily attendance will be found classified, not in classes of 20 each, but in about the following proportions:—35 in First Class, 30 in Second Class, 18 in Sequel Class, 12 in Third Class, and five in Fourth Class. Now, to supply 100 pupils, so classified, with an amount of requisites fully adequate to their wants for 12 months, the following sums should be expended:—

	£.	s.	d.
(a.) For 35 First Class pupils - - - - -	-	3	7½
(b.) For 30 Second Class pupils - - - - -	-	-	6 3
(c.) For 18 Sequel Class pupils - - - - -	-	1	9 7½
(d.) For 12 Third Class pupils - - - - -	-	1	3 6
(e.) For 5 Fourth Class pupils - - - - -	-	-	9 ½
	£.	3	12 9½

This gives an annual average outlay of just 8½d. per pupil. But even this outlay, small as it is, could be considered necessary only on the supposition that each pupil would require an entire fresh supply of school requisites every year. Of course this is not the case. Such a supposition would imply—

1. That the school requisites furnished by the Commissioners were of such a perishable nature that when taken into use they would barely last for a year; and
2. That each pupil remained but one year in the same class.

I wish the latter supposition were true: unfortunately, it is not true. And, in reference to the first, it is clear that out of the list of requisites already specified as necessary, First Books, Table Books, and writing copies are the only ones that will not outlive a year. Slates, too, perhaps, being very liable to accidents, may be considered perishable commodities; but Second Books, Sequels, Third Books, Fourth Books, Spelling Books, Grammars, Geographies, and Arithmetics, may, with ordinary care on the part of teachers and pupils, be made to last for years. When, therefore, a Fourth Class pupil, for instance, purchases his 2s. worth of requisites, only 7d. worth of them will have been used up by the end of the year. The remaining 1s. 5d. worth will not only serve *his* turn as long as he remains in the class, but will afterwards serve equally well his younger brothers and sisters according as they reach the same grade in the school. It is the same with a Third or Sequel Class pupil, and almost the same with a Second Class pupil. Another point to be considered is, that when two or more members of a family are attending the same school at the same time, one Grammar, one Geography, one Spelling Book, and, possibly, one Arithmetic, will suffice for all. Furthermore, it is a fact, of which Inspectors must be aware, that for some years past a good deal of requisites are purchased by National School children from booksellers and hawkers, especially in town and city schools.

Having taken all these things into consideration, I have come to the conclusion that an average annual outlay of sixpence per pupil in average daily attendance, or of threepence per pupil in average on rolls, is sufficient to keep a school fairly supplied with ordinary requisites, particularly after the school has been in operation for some two or three years.

13. *State of Schools as to Cleanliness, Order, &c.*—The following Table has been compiled

piled from the returns furnished by the District Inspectors. It shows the centesimal proportion of schools that were respectively in good, fair, middling, and bad state as regards the observance of order and cleanliness:—

	SCHOOL-ROOM.	CHILDREN.	PREMISES.
Good - - - - -	50.1	42.9	40.5
Fair - - - - -	33.7	43.	24.2
Middling - - - - -	14.2	13.4	14.
Bad - - - - -	2.0	5	21.8

These per-centages are, on the whole, very favourable. It must be gratifying to find that, as regards so important a matter as the observance of order and cleanliness, the school-rooms can be pronounced to be in an entirely or fairly satisfactory state in 84 cases out of 100, the pupils in 86 cases out of 100, and the school-premises and out-offices in 65 cases out of 100. In the per-centage of 21.8 returned as "bad" under the head of premises, are included those schools which have no out-offices at all, nor any school premises except the bare school-room.

14. *State of Schools as to attendance of Pupils.*—Although there were 890 schools in actual operation at the close of the year 1880 in my group of districts, it so happens, from some causes or other, that the Inspectors' Annual Reports furnish returns under this head relative to 831 schools only. Of these it is stated that the annual average attendance was

Under 30, in - - - -	131 schools, or 15.4 per cent.
30 but under 40, in - -	208 " 24.5 "
40 but under 50, in - -	184 " 21.7 "
50 but under 70, in - -	207 " 24.3 "
70 but under 100, in - -	71 " 8.4 "
100 or above, in - - -	53 " 6.2 "

TOTAL - - - - 854

The gross averages, however, are given for 871 schools:—

	BOYS.	GIRLS.	TOTAL.
(a) Gross average on Rolls,	42,353	47,109	89,462
(b) Gross average attendance,	22,952	25,519	48,471
(c) Per-centage of latter to former	54.3	54.2	54.2

The per-centage of the gross average attendance to the gross average number on rolls was 53.6 in 1859, and 53.2 in 1858. The highest per-centage in any of the districts for 1880 was 56.8 (in the Clonmel District); and the lowest, 51.7 (in the Mallow District). In the ordinary towns and rural schools (excluding model schools, workhouses, convent, prison, and evening schools) the per-centage of the average daily attendance to the average numbers on rolls for 1880, which is the recognised measure of the regularity of attendance, was as follows in each of the ten districts:—

In the Limerick District - - - - -	49.
" Newcastle " - - - - -	54.2
" Clonmel " - - - - -	54.
" Tralee " - - - - -	51.6
" Macroom " - - - - -	51.
" Mallow " - - - - -	50.1
" Killybeg " - - - - -	53.3
" Bantry " - - - - -	54.
" Dunganway " - - - - -	51.6
" Cork " - - - - -	55.4

The per-centages in the Limerick, Macroom, and Mallow Districts have not varied during the last three years. In the other districts there have been some variations, but in no case of any importance.

15. *State of Schools as to Efficiency of Instruction.*—The information furnished by the District Inspectors under this head refers to 787 schools only out of 890 that were in actual operation at the close of the year 1880. There are, therefore, 103 operation schools with respect to which their annual reports are silent. Of these there are 51 situated in one district, the Inspector in charge of which has been prevented by serious and long-continued illness from furnishing the necessary returns. Three other schools have been

excluded because the instruction given in them is *special*, one being a Navigation School, and two Model Agricultural Schools. It is probable that the three gael schools and five evening schools included in the total of 890 have also been excluded, and that in the case of another (perhaps taken into connexion late in the year) the Inspector may not have been sufficiently well acquainted with its merits to enable him to give the desired information.

As to the efficiency of the 787 schools, with regard both to the extent and quality of the instruction imparted in them, it appears from the District Inspectors' Annual Reports:—

(a.) That **READING** is *quite satisfactory* in 69 schools (8.7 per cent. of the entire number); *good* in 158 schools (20.2 per cent.); *fair* in 391 schools (49.6 per cent.); and, of course, *unsatisfactory* in the remaining 168 schools—that is, in about 21 out of every 100.

(b.) That **PENMANSHIP** is *quite satisfactory* in 59 schools (7.5 per cent.); *good* in 151 schools (19.1 per cent.); *fair* in 325 schools (41.3 per cent.); and, of course, *unsatisfactory* in the remaining 252 schools; that is, in about 32 out of every 100.

(c.) That **ARITHMETIC** is fairly taught, and to a fair proportion of pupils, in 534 schools; that is, in about 68 out of every 100.

(d.) That **WRITING FROM DICTATION** is fairly taught, and to a fair proportion of pupils, in 464 schools; that is, in about 59 out of every 100.

(e.) That **GRAMMAR** is fairly taught, and to a fair proportion of pupils, in 494 schools; that is, in about 63 out of every 100.

(f.) That **GEOGRAPHY** is fairly taught, and to a fair proportion of pupils, in 540 schools; that is, in about 68 schools out of every 100.

The above are, of course, the general results or summaries for the entire group of districts. When we compare, however, the returns from the several districts with one another we find them to differ to a very remarkable degree, plainly proving that the standards adopted by the Inspectors are anything but uniform. This will be evident from the following table, in which is given the centesimal proportion of schools in each district in which the reading and writing are stated by the Inspectors to be either "*quite satisfactory*" or "*good*," and dictation and arithmetic to be fairly taught, and to a fair proportion of pupils:—

DISTRICT.	READING.	WRITING.	ARITHMETIC.	DICTATION.
Limerick - - - -	- -	18.3	79.3	50.7
Newcastle - - - -	7.5	8.6	46.2	22.6
Cleonsal - - - -	41.7	31.9	79.3	72.2
Trillick - - - -	30.6	26.	77.4	71.4
Monmoy - - - -	13.	15.3	61.1	41.3
Mallow - - - -	34.5	39.	61.	63.8
Killarney - - - -	18.5	16.	43.	65.4
Bantry - - - -	44.7	21.2	70.6	57.6
Cork - - - -	19.	16.	79.	57.

A glance at the above columns, especially the first two, will suffice to show how very variously the efficiency of their schools is estimated by the different district inspectors. The differences in the percentages are so striking that I cannot for a moment suppose them to be mainly occasioned by different degrees of efficiency in the schools, but rather by the different standards of efficiency adopted by the inspectors. This is greatly to be regretted. It is a serious evil to which every effort should be made to apply a remedy; inasmuch as, if allowed to go on unchecked, it must not only render the statistical returns of the Inspectors utterly valueless regarding the most important and interesting features of our system of education, but must be highly injurious to the schools. The Commissioners, by their circular of the 11th May 1858, endeavoured to remedy the evil, but, as it seems, without effect.

III.—Teachers.

17. Teachers of schools deriving aid from the Commissioners of National Education are of two kinds:—I. *Lay teachers*; II. *Teachers who are members of religious communities*.

The

The latter are *nuns* and *nuns*, and are the teachers of the class of schools called Convent National Schools. Of these schools there are at present 36 in actual operation in my group of districts, the Bantry District being the only one in which there is no convent school. This exception, however, will have disappeared before the close of the current year. The importance of these schools may be measured by the fact that 35 of them (from one, having been recently established, no return was obtained) commanded, in 1880, a gross average daily attendance of 9,103 pupils, or about *one-fifth* of the gross average daily attendance of all the other 854 National Schools taken together.

These teachers are not classified by the Board, nor are they required to submit to an examination, as the Commissioners take for granted that they are sufficiently well educated to discharge the duties of national teachers efficiently; and, in point of fact, it is undeniable that the majority of them—of the *nuns* especially—are infinitely better educated than the teachers of ordinary National Schools, while it is equally true that they bring to the discharge of their duties a disinterestedness and devotedness to which even the most zealous of the lay teachers can have no claim. It is also undeniable that their schools do an incalculable amount of good. Their pupils receive a moral and religious training of the highest order; they are educated to habits of truth-telling, modesty, order, and cleanliness, and such of them as attend with fair regularity, and continue at school till they reach the upper classes, are sure to receive an excellent literary education.

It is not my intention, however, just now to enter at greater length into the merits of these schools and their teachers. I have it in view to inspect all the convent schools in my group of districts as soon as I can command sufficient time for the purpose, and to make them the subject of a special report; but it may be useful to notice here two circumstances which cannot but interfere with their efficiency:—

(a.) These teachers very seldom have any opportunity of receiving a technical training as teachers either before or after making their religious profession; and hence although they are undoubtedly well educated in a general sense, I apprehend that many of them have a very limited acquaintance with those improved methods of teaching and school organisation which have received the sanction of experience. The want of such technical knowledge is most apparent in their management of the junior classes.

(b.) It is a characteristic of these teachers that they are impatient of competition. A rival school, if it can possibly be extinguished, is not allowed to exist. In crowded cities this is, of course, impossible; but in Tralee, Killarney, Newcastle, Kinsale, Queenstown, Middleton, Skibbereen, Bandon, Dingle, and a host of smaller towns, no female schools, except those connected with convents, are to be found; none are permitted to be established. In some of them, indeed, such as Tralee, Killarney, Newcastle, and Dingle, in which there are monks' schools as well as nuns' schools, even the ordinary male National Schools have been proscribed.

Now, I am perfectly convinced that in pursuing this policy these worthy teachers are actuated by good motives. They have faith in themselves, as all earnest devoted teachers have, or ought to have; and believing conscientiously that their own schools are best adapted for the proper training of youth, they consider themselves justified in using all their influence to remove other schools out of the way. But to me such a policy appears most objectionable. It savours of intolerance. In fact—there is no use in mincing words—it is intolerance; and, like every other intolerant policy, the evils it gives rise to are more than sufficient to counterbalance the good it is expected to effect.

In the first place, in every mass of population, while there is, undoubtedly, a large proportion of children that *will* attend the schools of religious communities in preference to any other, there is always, on the other hand, a not inconsiderable number of children who would readily attend *lay* schools, but cannot be induced to frequent those conducted by religious teachers. This is a fact which cannot be gainsaid. I have an intimate knowledge of its truth, and could readily adduce abundant proof of it. And let it be understood that I am not alluding to children of different denominations, but only to Catholic children. What is the result? When the *lay* schools are extinguished, a considerable portion of the children of the poor of the locality receive no education whatever. In the town of Killarney there are two convent schools and one monks' school for the education of the children of a population amounting to nearly 6,000 persons. No day school conducted by *lay* teachers would be tolerated there. Well, I have it on the best authority that the number of children attending schools in Killarney is considerably less than that of those who never enter a school.

In the next place, this impotence of competition not only extinguishes the principle of emulation, which exercises a healthy stimulating influence upon schools, as upon individuals, but also leads the conductors of convent schools to admit pupils without limit—without any reference to the available teaching power. The expediency—the necessity—of restricting the attendance to that number which the schools are capable of accommodating conveniently, or the teachers of instructing efficiently, is practically ignored. The school-rooms in most cases are crowded to excess, the attendance out of all proportion to the teaching power. The inevitable result is, that in such schools the rate of progress is extremely slow; it takes a very long time for a child to work her way from the lowest to the highest class, and, in point of fact, comparatively few ever reach that goal. The great majority leave the school, and give up schooling, before they have completed half the school course.

The remedies I would suggest for these defects are—

1. Improved organisation of the schools by the agency of the organisers.
2. The appointment of a well-qualified, experienced, and skilful lay teacher as assistant in each school.
3. More efficient inspection.

These remedies could, of course, be applied only with the sanction of the religious communities to whom the schools belong; but I do not think they would meet with any opposition, especially if the appointment of the lay assistants were left, as it ought to be, in the hands of the Managers of these schools, the Commissioners only requiring that the lay assistant should in every case be a trained first-class teacher of approved skill. Such teachers would not only be the means of introducing into these schools a knowledge of school organization and improved methods of communicating instruction, but they would relieve the good nuns from a vast amount of drudgery connected with the keeping of the school accounts and the making out of statistical returns.

I am bound to state, however, that no remedy will be of any avail until a determination is come to by the conductors of these schools to keep down the attendance in each case to that number which their rooms are capable of conveniently accommodating, and which they themselves can properly instruct. This is the chief remedy that must be applied before any other is resorted to. No improvement in school organization, no amount of skill in communicating knowledge, will ever enable one teacher to do the work of two, or ten teachers to do the work of 15.

I shall take up this subject on some other occasion, when I shall have time to discuss it at greater length. I quit it for the present with the consciousness of having been led by good motives to give expression to some unpleasant truths—all the more unpleasant that they have now been uttered for the first time. But I have no fear of the truth, however unpleasant it may be, or however unpleasant may be the task of plainly speaking it. I have no unfriendly feeling for the convent schools. On the contrary, no one can appreciate more highly than I do the great good they have done in the localities where they have been established; and it is for this very reason, and because I am convinced that with more judicious management their sphere of usefulness would be vastly increased, that I have ventured to call the attention of the good nuns to those defects in their school systems, which in my humble judgment must seriously mar the effects of their zealous and charitable labours.

18. The lay teachers employed in ordinary National Schools are of four kinds:—Principal teachers, assistant teachers, paid monitors, and workmistresses, or teachers of needlework.

19. The number of *workmistresses* in the service of the Board in my group of districts at the close of the year 1860, was 110. At the close of 1859 the number was 83, and only 69 at the close of 1858.

Workmistresses are not always exclusively employed as teachers of needlework. A considerable number of them act as assistant teachers of junior classes, and in this capacity their services are of great advantage, particularly in crowded schools. But their special function is to give instruction in plain sewing, knitting, embroidery, and the cutting-out of garments. The usefulness and efficiency of their services in this respect is greatly diminished, owing to the want of materials. This is particularly the case in rural schools, which are just the schools wherein it is most desirable that plain sewing and knitting, as well as cutting out, should be properly taught. In such schools it is only on extremely rare occasions that the Inspector finds the sewing class even moderately supplied with work. On the part of teachers and Managers there seems to be either a profound indifference to, or a total ignorance of, the facilities afforded by the Board's apparatus department, of procuring at an extremely cheap rate all the materials necessary for giving efficient practical instruction in this indispensable branch of female education. I would suggest that District Inspectors should be requested to avail themselves of every opportunity of calling the attention of School Managers and teachers to this serious defect, and to the easy means of remedying it.

20. The number of *assistant teachers* employed in National Schools in the ten districts under my charge was 216 (138 males and 78 females), at the close of the year 1860. At the close of 1859 the number was 167 (100 males and 67 females), and at the close of 1858 it was 154 (*viz.*, 101 males and 53 females).

The position of an assistant teacher in an ordinary National School is for the most part a very unenviable one; except in an extremely few cases he has nothing whatever to depend upon for his support but the scanty salary he derives from the Commissioners. He receives no local aid in the shape of school-fees, subscriptions, or tuitions (the latter being almost always monopolized by the principal teacher); and as he is generally unmarried, and consequently entitled to barely 15*l.* a year salary from the Board (14*l.* in the case of females), it is not easy to imagine how he can contrive to make both ends meet. He is, moreover, necessarily occupied during school-hours—all the drudgery of the school falls to his lot, and he has to study hard, morning and evening, and always under circumstances most unfavourable to study, in order to obtain ultimate recognition as a National teacher.

The result of all this is, that Managers and Inspectors find it extremely difficult to procure

procure qualified persons to act as assistant teachers—I mean, persons qualified according to the standard prescribed by the Board, which is that for third-class teachers or probationers; and hence arises a practical inconvenience of no small weight in the working of large schools, for the Managers are obliged either to accept the services of unqualified assistants, who are sure to be dismissed at the next district examinations, or to leave their schools unprovided with adequate teaching power. I can assure the Commissioners that this inconvenience operates as a serious impediment to the efficient working of large schools.

The remedies I would suggest are these:—

(a.) That *assistant teachers* should be constituted a distinct class or grade in the service of the Board.

(b.) That for admission to this class or grade candidates should be required to be not less than 15 years of age.

(c.) That all young persons not less than 15 years of age, and not physically disqualified, should be deemed eligible for this grade, provided they were found on examination able—

(1.) To read the Third and lower Lesson Books with ease and intelligence, and with correct pronunciation.

(2.) To explain with clearness the meaning of the principal word and phrases occurring in them.

(3.) To spell and write correctly from dictation any sentences selected from these books.

(4.) To write a good hand.

(5.) To explain and to work sums expertly in the simple and compound rules, short accounts, and simple proportion, as given in the First Book of Arithmetic.

(6.) To distinguish readily and correctly the parts of speech.

(7.) To point out and explain intelligently the outlines of the Map of the World.

(d.) That the salary attached to this class should be 14*l.* a-year for males, and 12*l.* a-year for females.

(e.) That young persons on admission to this class should be furnished with a certificate of competency to act as *assistants* in ordinary National Schools, and should be deemed ineligible to the office of principal teacher until they should prove their title to a higher certificate at one of the annual district examinations.

(f.) That such assistants, provided they discharge their duties satisfactorily, should be permitted, but should not be compelled, to attend the annual district examinations for the purpose of establishing their claim to a higher certificate.

I would expect very beneficial results from these regulations, if sanctioned by the Board. It will not be denied, I think, that young persons of 15 years of age, if possessed of the acquirements indicated above, would be qualified to discharge the duties of assistants in ordinary National Schools. They would certainly be qualified to teach all the subjects that assistants in such schools are ever called upon to teach. While, therefore, there would be nothing to prevent more highly qualified persons from acting in the capacity of assistant teachers at the higher rates of salary, if they should find it their interest to do so, the regulations above suggested would have the effect of extending very considerably the class from which eligible candidates for such situations might be selected, and would thus tend to remove the very great difficulty which Managers experience at present in increasing the teaching power in large schools. In fact, under such regulations the assistant teachership in a school would always be within the reach of any well-instructed, steady, and well-behaved pupil of the school; and thus not only would it operate as a stimulus to both pupils and teacher, but in time this great advantage would be gained, that the assistant teacher would almost always be a *native of the locality*, living with his own family, and thus relieved from the hardship and disheartenment attending the struggle that would otherwise be necessary, to provide food, raiment, and lodging, with the very meagre salary attached to the office.

21. *Paid Monitors*.—The year 1860 may be said to mark an era in the history of the monitorial system of the National Board, both because of the remarkable extension of the system which took place in that year, and also because in that year such arrangements affecting the annual examinations of the monitors were sanctioned by the Commissioners as enable the District Inspectors to test more fully and satisfactorily than in former years the efficiency of their training and qualifications.

The total number of paid monitors in my group of districts on the 31st December, 1858, was 187 (viz., 83 males and 94 females); on the 31st December, 1859, the number was 263 (viz., 129 males and 134 females); but on the 31st December, 1860, there were no less than 334 in the service of the Board (viz., 137 males and 197 females.) It will be seen that it is mainly in the number of *female* paid monitors that the increase has taken place.

Of the 334 paid monitors, 46 (viz., 18 males and 28 females), were of the class called *junior*, and 288 (viz., 119 males and 169 females), of the class called *senior*. In these numbers I do not include the paid monitors connected with the three District Model Schools under my charge.

The following table, which requires no explanation, is based upon returns kindly furnished to me by the District Inspectors:—

DISTRICTS.	Number of Senior Monitors in Service on the 31st December 1859.		Number appointed during the Year 1860.		Total Number of Senior Paid Monitors that served during the Year 1860.		Number that ceased to act as Paid Monitors during 1860.		Number of Senior Monitors in Service on 31st December 1860.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Lincoln	9	20	8	28	12	48	2	12	19	36
Newcastle	5	8	4	9	9	16	2	4	7	12
Gloucester	10	14	2	4	12	14	5	4	7	10
Teles	6	6	2	12	8	18	3	2	5	16
Marston	10	9	11	8	21	17	4	9	17	8
Malton	13	16	9	8	22	24	4	3	16	21
Kilnsey	15	7	5	4	20	11	3	2	17	9
Bantry	7	6	3	1	10	7	3	8	7	7
Dunstable	6	16	6	18	12	34	2	13	19	21
Cath	25	27	8	12	33	39	10	10	23	29
Total	108	129	53	103	161	236	42	57	119	169

It appears from this table that the total number of young persons that served as senior paid monitors in my group of districts, during 1860, was 397 (viz., 161 males and 236 females). A similar table for junior paid monitors would show that the total number of this class that served in 1860 was 61. Thus the entire monitorial system in the 10 districts, during 1860, comprised a total of 448 individuals, which exceeds by 120 the corresponding number for 1859.

It appears further from the above table, that of the total number of senior paid monitors, 99 (viz., 42 males and 57 females) ceased to act as such in the course of 1860. Of the junior paid monitors, 17 (viz., eight males and nine females) also ceased to act in that capacity in the course of the same year. Now, it is important to know regarding these 116 paid monitors, (1) how many of them had served their full term (four years for seniors, three years for juniors), and (2) how many of them have become National teachers?

The following table will supply an answer to the first query:—

	Senior Class.		Junior Class.		TOTALS.
	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Of those that ceased to act as paid monitors in 1860, how many—					
Had completed their full term of service	14	15	3	6	37
Had entered upon, but not completed their 4th year.	7	5	—	—	12
Had entered upon, but not completed their 3d year.	2	2	—	1	5
Had entered upon, but not completed their 2d year.	8	18	3	3	32
Had not completed, or had just completed their 1st year.	11	17	2	—	30

Thus it appears that of the 116 paid monitors, who ceased to act as such in 1860, only 37 (or about 32 per cent.) had completed their full term of service, while no less than 63 (or about 58 per cent.) had resigned before the completion of their second year.

In reference to the second query, the returns with which I have been favoured by the District Inspectors inform me, that of the 99 senior paid monitors, who ceased to act as such in the course of last year, 41 (viz., 15 males and 26 females) have become National teachers, and that five others have entered as pupil teachers in the district model schools, making a total of 46; the remaining 53 have not continued in the service of the Board in any capacity.

These facts will appear very discouraging, and doubtless they are so to some extent, particularly the first, in reference to which, however, I must express it as my opinion that if greater discrimination and judgment were exercised in the selection of candidates for paid monitorships, and if their instruction and training after their appointment were carefully attended to, we should not find so many of them resigning before the completion of their term of service. I very much fear that in many cases paid monitors are overworked in the schools, and very imperfectly instructed by the teachers. If this be true, it is not surprising that monitors so treated should conceive an aversion for the duties of their office. I am of opinion that a rule should be made by the Board prohibiting teachers from occupying junior monitors for more than two hours each day, or senior monitors for more than three hours each day, in actual teaching. For the rest of the daily school time they

they should be regarded as *pupils*, and should be allowed to participate as such in the instruction given by the teacher. The rule prescribed in the Board's circular of the 12th August 1859, by which the teacher of a school in which a junior or senior paid monitor is employed, is required to give the monitor special instruction for at least one hour on each of five days in the week, should be strictly enforced. Some teachers, I find, endeavour to comply with this rule by instructing the monitor during the half hour set apart in the middle of the day for recreation. I consider this practice most objectionable, and that it ought to be discountenanced.

The fact that only about 46 per cent. of the senior paid monitors, who ceased to act in that capacity in the course of 1860, have continued in the service of the Board in other capacities, is not surprising, nor ought it to be viewed as a discouragement. The monitorial system has received such an extension within the last two years, and is likely to receive such further extension within the next few years (for the Inspectors' returns show that in my group of districts there are still not less than 300 schools, in each of which the attendance would warrant the appointment of at least one paid monitor), that it would be simply impossible to provide permanent employment in the Board's service for one half of the paid monitors, and it is most undesirable that they should be led to expect such a thing. At the same time I am entirely convinced that in the course of a few years it will be found that school managers, when seeking for teachers, will generally give the preference to persons who had been trained as monitors; and, consequently, that such of the latter as may evince a decided taste for the calling will experience little difficulty in obtaining employment as National teachers, according as their periods of service shall have expired. For the rest it must not be forgotten that if monitors be carefully selected in the first instance by the Inspectors (with whom the responsibility rests), and afterwards judiciously instructed by their teachers, they will, by their services in the schools, amply repay whatever portion of the public money may be expended upon them during their course of training. And if nothing more could be said in defence of the monitorial system which has been created and fostered by the Commissioners, than that it returns full value for the expense incurred in maintaining it, surely that alone should be regarded as a sufficient justification of the great extension which it has lately received under their sanction; but when it is further considered, both that the monitorial system is destined to be the great nursery of National and other teachers, and also that by its agency a vast number of young persons of both sexes are annually selected from the poorer classes, and educated and trained with more than ordinary care and skill, every enlightened thinker will admit that the system is calculated to exercise a beneficial influence, not only upon popular education, but upon society at large, and that it would be for the interest of both that it should receive a still greater development.

22. Annual Examinations of Paid Monitors.—The annual examinations of senior paid monitors for 1860 took place in the week ended the 13th October 1860. The males were examined on the 9th and 10th, and the females on the 11th and 12th. The examinations were conducted in each district by the District Inspector, and each examination consisted of a *written* examination (which occupied one day), and an *oral* examination (which occupied the second day). This arrangement was an improvement upon the practice of former years, when the written and oral examinations took place on the same day, and must consequently have been extremely hurried and superficial.

At the date of the examinations there were in my group of districts 275 senior paid monitors (114 males and 161 females); and of these, 151 (*viz.*, 69 males and 82 females), having been appointed previously to the commencement of the year, were summoned to the examinations. It is creditable to these young people that all but two attended, many of them having had to perform long and fatiguing journeys.

On this occasion I shall not enter into the details of these examinations, being very much pressed for time just now, and this report having already expanded beyond due proportions. But as I look upon the monitorial system as of the highest importance in its bearing upon popular education, and as, in my judgment, its success will depend very much upon the effectiveness of the annual examinations, I shall make it my business to furnish the Commissioners with a detailed report upon the subject each year, setting forth the answering of the monitors, and giving my opinion in the plainest terms both as to the manner in which the examinations shall have been conducted, and as regards the faithfulness with which the teachers may have discharged their duties in relation to the monitors.

For the present I shall content myself with making a few observations, which suggested themselves to me when I was revising the monitors' written exercises after the examinations of last year:—

(a.) In the first place, I must, in candour, state that the answering of not a few of the monitors was such as led me to believe that sufficient care had not been exercised in their selection. I shall mention no names; but in one district, out of nine monitors examined, all of whom had been appointed more than twelve months previously, the penmanship of three was bad, the spelling of seven was very bad, or very indifferent, and five failed in composition. The general answering of two was so extremely unsatisfactory that I was obliged to recommend their dismissal.

(b.) Another thing that struck me was the diversity of the test of proficiency applied by the different Inspectors at the oral examinations. In some districts the examination

appears to have been strict and searching; in others very lenient. The test of proficiency in spelling, for instance, was, in some districts a dictation exercise, containing several sentences—none very easy—none, however, too difficult; in others it was an exercise consisting of two or three extremely simple sentences; and in one district no dictation exercise at all was given.

(c.) It appears that monitors whose fourth year of service expires in the interval between two successive annual examinations, escape the fourth year's examination altogether. Not being in the service of the Board as monitors at the time, they are not summoned. This is undoubtedly a defect in the system, and ought to be remedied. The remedy I should propose is this: that monitors of the fourth year should be summoned, not to the annual examination of *paid monitors*, but to the annual examination of *teachers*, and should be examined along with the probationers and third-class teachers of their respective districts; and that monitors, whose fourth year of service might happen to expire before the date fixed for such annual examinations, should have the option to continue in the same capacity and at the same rate of salary until such examinations should be held.

(d.) Another point of considerable importance which forced itself upon my attention, was the necessity of carefully revising the "*Programme of Examination and Course of Study for Paid Monitors*;" and the object of such revision ought, I think, to be, to lay down such a course of instruction and study as would be most likely to secure for these young persons a *practic* and *thorough* knowledge of a few necessary branches, rather than a vague and superficial acquaintance with a great many—such a course, in short, as would impart to them a good knowledge of their own language, would make them pleasing and intelligent readers, good writers, good spellers, expert and intelligent arithmeticians, well acquainted with the geography of the British Empire, and with such a knowledge of grammar and composition as would enable them to express their thoughts with clearness and propriety.

23. *Principal Teachers*.—At the close of the year 1860 the number of principal teachers in my group of districts was 852 (viz., 530 males and 322 females); at the close of 1859 the number was 838 (viz., 526 males and 312 females); and at the close of 1858 it was 829 (viz., 523 males and 306 females). There was an increase, therefore, in the number of principal teachers in 1860, of *fourteen* as compared with 1859; and of *twenty-three*, as compared with 1858.

Of the principal teachers, 347 males and 141 females (about 65 and 44 per cent. respectively), were *trained* (the corresponding per-centages in 1859 were 64 and 44) and 286 males and 107 females (about 54 and 35 per cent. respectively), were *married*. The corresponding per-centages in 1859 were 52 and 33; and in the preceding year, 48 and 33.

The average incomes of the principal teachers were as follow in the several districts:—

District.	Males.	Females.	District.	Males.	Females.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.		£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Limerick - - -	37 19 6	28 19 8	Mallow - - -	34 1 7	28 7 -
Neves-De - - -	39 1 5	27 14 2	Killarney - - -	38 9 7	27 10 6
Clonmel - - -	38 6 4	31 4 3	Bantry - - -	29 5 3	22 - -
Trillick - - -	29 12 1	19 8 3	Dunsmurray - -	36 12 1	28 14 5
Macroom - - -	56 9 8	25 16 2	Cock - - -	32 18 6	26 14 3

It is gratifying to find that the average incomes of both male and female teachers in my group of districts are increasing year after year. This will be evident from the following comparison of their average incomes during the last three years:—

	1858.	1859.	1860.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Males - - - - -	30 9 6	33 11 -	35 17 4
Females - - - - -	22 16 4	26 2 0	27 3 4

Thus, the average incomes of male and female teachers in 1860 exceeded by 5*l.* 7*s.* 10*d.* and 3*l.* 8*s.*, respectively, their average incomes in 1858. I should explain that the above are the average incomes of the principal teachers of the *ordinary town and rural schools* in the ten districts; and that in calculating these averages we have taken into account only three kinds of payment or emolument, viz.: (1.) Salary and allowances or gratuities from the Commissioners for their services in day schools; (2.) School fees; (3.) Local endowments or subscriptions. We have not taken into account any other source of income or emolument, such as evening schools, tuitions, sub-pectmasterships, land surveying, land or residence attached to school, &c. But amongst the principal teachers we have reckoned *seventy-six probationers*. Now, strictly speaking, as I remarked in a former Report, proba-

probationers are not *National* teachers at all; they are merely *candidates* for admission into the staff of recognized National teachers, and during their period of probation are paid very small salaries. It seems but fair, therefore, that in calculating the average income of principal teachers, the earnings of such probationers as may happen to be in principal charge of schools, should be altogether omitted. Their salaries being small, and their schools the least remunerative, the including of their incomes in the calculation must lower the average considerably. I would suggest, therefore, that in future in calculating the average income of principal teachers of ordinary town and rural schools, no note should be taken of such of them as may be *unclassed*, or at least, that the average incomes of *classed* and *unclassed* principal teachers should be calculated separately.

In connexion with this question there is another point which appears to me deserving of consideration. To estimate justly the value of teachers' incomes as means of support, it would be necessary to have before us the average annual income, not of each individual teacher, but of each family. When the husband and wife, and perhaps one or two of their children, are all employed in teaching, and contribute to the maintenance of the entire family, the income of the head of the family is virtually made up of the joint earnings of the individuals that compose it. Now, this is not at all an uncommon state of things. On the contrary, a principal teacher's wife is very commonly a teacher herself, and not unfrequently his son or daughter also is assistant teacher or paid monitor. I am myself acquainted with not a few such cases. I would suggest, therefore, that District Inspectors should be requested to give in their future annual reports the average income of each principal teacher's family. It is very easily calculated from data supplied by their District Books and the teachers' annual returns. Mr. Robinson, the Inspector of the Newcastle District, has the following remarks upon this subject in his Annual Report for 1860:—

"Many teachers are married to other teachers, or have sons and daughters living with them, who earn salaries as monitors, assistants, or workmistresses. I have gone over the list, and I find that there are in my district 75 *houses or families*, whose incomes are as follows:—

In 1 case the family income is	£. 15
In 4 cases " is above	15 but under £. 20
In 6 cases it is	" 20
In 8 " " " "	" 25
In 16 " " " "	" 30
In 14 " " " "	" 40
In 7 " " " "	" 50
In 7 " " " "	" 60
In 13 " " " "	70 or upwards,

giving an average of 49l. 1s. 2d. for each family."

The gradual increase of the incomes of the principal teachers of the ordinary National Schools in my group of districts, cannot be attributed, I am sorry to say, to any decided increase in the amount of "local contributions." That this is the case will be evident from the following table, which shows the average amount of payments made to each principal teacher, in the shape of school-fees, endowments, and local subscriptions, in each district during the years 1858, 1859, and 1860:—

DISTRICTS.	1858.	1859.	1860.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Limerick - - - - -	11 7 1½	8 13 3	8 1 10
Newcastle - - - - -	10 14 3½	10 10 -	10 3 4
Clonsilla - - - - -	8 5 6½	9 8 10	9 11 0½
Trillick - - - - -	4 19 -	5 3 -	5 - 10
Macroom - - - - -	8 10 -	7 11 1½	5 15 9½
Mallow - - - - -	6 12 8½	6 17 10	6 15 -½
Kilbarney - - - - -	6 15 1	7 6 2	6 17 10
Bantry - - - - -	5 8 11	5 3 6	5 13 6
Dunsmurray - - - - -	5 11 1	6 8 4	7 4 6
Cork - - - - -	10 0 3½	9 7 5½	10 17 6½
TOTALS - - - - £.	78 7 -½	70 15 5½	70 5 1

A glance at this table will show that in the aggregate the amount of "local aid" was less in 1860 than in either of the two preceding years. For the gradual increase in their incomes, therefore, small as it is, the principal teachers are indebted to the Commissioners alone.

24. *Classification of Teachers.*—In the District Inspectors' Annual Reports, principal and assistant teachers are classified together as regards rank, age, and length of service. I think it very desirable that they should be classified separately in future. This would entail no additional trouble on the inspectors, but would give increased value to the statistics.

Taking principal and assistant teachers together, then, it appears that at the close of 1860 there were—

	Males.	Females.
In First Division of First Class - - -	11	4
In Second Division " - - -	23	18
In Third Division " - - -	38	21
In First Division of Second Class - - -	64	45
In Second Division " - - -	95	45
In First Division of Third Class - - -	178	90
In Second Division " - - -	139	106
Probationers - - -	119	71
TOTAL - - -	658	400

It appears, therefore, that of the entire number of teachers there were—

	Males.	Females.
	<i>Per cent.</i>	<i>Per cent.</i>
In First Class - - - - -	10.8	10.7
In Second Class - - - - -	24.1	21.5
In Third Class - - - - -	47.4	48.7
Probationers - - - - -	17.8	17.8

The corresponding per-centages for 1859 were—

In First Class - - - - -	11.1	10.3
In Second Class - - - - -	22.9	21.9
In Third Class - - - - -	49.3	49.3
Probationers - - - - -	17.6	18.5

And for 1858—

In First Class - - - - -	10.3	11.7
In Second Class - - - - -	24.4	23.4
In Third Class - - - - -	45.4	43.7
Probationers - - - - -	19.7	21.2

It will be seen from these three tables that the relative proportions of teachers in the several classes have varied very little within the last three years. This is true, particularly of the first and second classes. I am happy to observe, however, that although the proportion of probationers has, like the other grades, varied but slightly within the period stated, the absolute number of probationers in principal charge of schools has been diminishing each year. For of the principal teachers of ordinary National schools in my circuit of districts, 97 were probationers in 1858, whereas in 1859 and 1860 the number had decreased to 79 and 76, respectively.

The next table refers to the ages of the teachers (principals and assistants)—

AGES.	Males.	Females.
Under 20 years - - - - -	74	79
20 but under 30 - - - - -	310	256
30 " 40 - - - - -	124	59
40 " 50 - - - - -	98	11
50 " 60 - - - - -	82	2
60 and above - - - - -	13	2
TOTAL - - -	608	400

Hence it appears that 76 per cent. of the male teachers, and 96 per cent. of the female teachers, were under 40 years of age. The per-centages for 1859, were 76.4 and 96.8, respectively; and 77.2 and 96.7 for 1858.

The following table gives a view of their periods of service under the Board:—

	Males.	Females.
Had served under 3 years - - - -	163	117
" 3 years, but under 5 years - -	93	67
" 5 years, but under 10 years - -	162	111
" 10 years, but under 15 years - -	120	69
" 15 years, and above - - - -	130	36
Total - - - -	668	400

Thus of the total number of teachers, 38·3 per cent. of the males, and 46 per cent. of the females, appear to have been less than five years in the service of the Board. The corresponding per-centages for 1859 were 35·3 and 45·6, respectively; and 35·1 and 46·8 for 1858.

25. There is one point connected with the interests of teachers upon which I had intended to express my views fully in this Report. I refer to the necessity, as it appears to me, of carefully revising the "*programme of qualifications for National Teachers*," and of effecting considerable modifications of the usual method of testing their qualifications by examination. As I find, however, that I have not reserved either sufficient time or sufficient space for a full discussion of these important questions, and, moreover, as my views regarding them are well known in the Education Office, I have decided upon leaving them untouched here.

IV.—Pupils.

26. The Annual Reports of the District Inspectors for the past year contain the results of returns received from 865 National Schools, setting forth the total number of individual pupils whose names appeared upon the rolls during the year ended the 31st December 1860. It appears that this total amounted to 139,087 pupils, giving an average of about 161 pupils for each school. Of this number, 65,939 were boys, and 73,148 were girls.

27. The same reports give the classification, according to age, of the total number of pupils whose names appeared upon the rolls of the same schools during the quarter ended the 31st December 1860. I insert here the average ages of boys and girls for each district:—

			Corresponding averages for 1859.	
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.
Limerick - - - - -	9·9	8·9	10·5	9·
Newcastle - - - - -	10·3	10·1	10·0	10·3
Clonmel - - - - -	10·1	9·4	10·	9·7
Tralee - - - - -	10·8	10·5	10·9	10·3
Macroom - - - - -	8·8	10·4	10·1	9·5
Mallow - - - - -	10·2	9·9	10·5	9·0
Kilkenny - - - - -	10·5	9·9	10·2	9·9
Bantry - - - - -	11·	9·5	—	—
Danmaway - - - - -	9·7	9·6	9·7	9·8
Cork - - - - -	9·2	9·	9·5	9·

These averages differ only in a very trifling degree from those returned in the Annual Report for 1858, except in the Macroom District in which the average age of boys is so small, in comparison, both with the averages of the other districts, and with those given for the same district in 1858 and 1859 (viz. 10·5 and 10·1), that I am led to suspect that some serious error must have crept into the returns or calculation.

28. The following is the classification, according to religious denomination, of the pupils referred to in the preceding section :—

DISTRICT.	Roman Catholics.		Established Church.		Presbyterians.		Other Protestant Denominations.		Schools in which Catholics and Protestants are Read together.
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	
Limerick - - -	3,780	5,323	123	86	83	15	11	16	33
Newcastle - - -	5,282	5,257	49	32	2	-	1	-	29
Cloonal - - -	3,356	3,938	125	122	11	8	7	10	19
Trillick - - -	4,483	5,323	47	85	3	2	-	-	24
Monaghan - - -	4,883	4,796	36	27	5	5	-	-	15
Midlow - - -	4,184	4,805	45	25	12	6	-	9	28
Killybeg - - -	4,138	4,695	85	80	-	-	-	-	28
Bantry - - -	3,835	5,221	72	69	-	-	-	-	19
Dunsmurray - - -	4,285	4,872	85	52	7	3	-	1	27
Cork - - -	6,516	8,883	219	194	15	8	5	-	30
TOTALS - - -	43,051	50,266	865	721	78	48	24	36	275
	93,317		1,600						-
Per Cent. - - -	59.2		1.6						31.8

On comparing this table with the corresponding one in my Report for 1859, it will be seen that while the number of schools in which Protestant and Catholic children attend together, has diminished by nine, the number of Protestant children attending such schools has increased.

29. The following table shows, for each of the 10 districts, the literary classification of 78,281 children, whose names were on the rolls of 865 national schools on the 31st December 1860 :—

TABLE showing the Classification of the Children on the Rolls.

DISTRICT.	No. of Schools referred to.	In I. Class.	In II. Class.	In Special Class.	In III. Class.	In IV. Class.	In V. Class.	TOTALS.
Limerick - - -	83	5,511	2,025	1,688	905	442	28	8,491
Newcastle - - -	93	2,980	2,448	1,352	1,235	756	27	3,785
Cloonal - - -	78	1,154	1,485	942	720	348	32	3,689
Trillick - - -	85	3,484	2,610	1,491	1,091	552	35	6,863
Monaghan - - -	92	2,477	2,994	1,347	1,094	515	45	7,567
Midlow - - -	82	1,808	1,820	1,323	784	577	64	6,983
Killybeg - - -	81	3,168	1,945	1,438	949	544	150	7,153
Bantry - - -	83	2,059	1,855	1,093	725	315	-	5,948
Dunsmurray - - -	91	2,375	2,284	1,632	988	522	13	7,792
Cork - - -	97	4,138	5,458	2,276	1,473	848	52	15,064
TOTALS - - -	865	27,829	33,138	14,059	9,703	5,311	451	78,281
Per-centages - - -	-	55.2	37.7	18	12.4	6.8	0.6	-
Per-centages for 1859 - - -	-	54.5	27.5	18.5	12.2	6.1	0.5	-
Per-centages for 1858 - - -	-	56.1	28.5	18.1	12.7	6.5	0.5	-

I have placed here in juxtaposition the corresponding per-centages for the last three years, for the purpose of showing how very slightly the literary classification of the pupils has varied within that interval. This remarkable fact may be exhibited more strikingly in the following manner :—

	In 1858.	In 1859.	In 1860.
In Junior Division (1st and 2d Classes) - - -	65.2	61.8	62.2
In Middle Division (Special Class) - - -	18.1	18.3	18.0
In Senior Division (3d, 4th, and 5th Classes) - - -	18.7	19.9	19.8
Total Number of Pupils referred to - - -	81,468	77,441	78,281

I must

I must say I look upon this as by far the most curious and remarkable feature in the statistical history of our schools. As yet I am unprepared to explain how it should be interpreted; but it would be disheartening and lamentable indeed, if it should appear, that the conclusion legitimately to be drawn from it is, that only 18 or 19 per cent. of all the pupils attending National Schools ever reach the higher classes. I regard the instruction received by pupils while in the lower classes as of very little value in itself, as scarcely of any value indeed, except as a preparation for the instruction which is imparted in the higher classes, and which alone, in my humble judgment, can reasonably be expected to produce permanent impressions. When, therefore, a pupil is finally withdrawn from school before he reaches the higher classes, the information he carries away with him is of such an evanescent character, that it is more than probable it will have entirely disappeared before he arrives at manhood. It is this conviction which makes me shrink from acknowledging, without further and deeper reflection, the legitimacy of the conclusion indicated above. But if that conclusion should ultimately be verified, I venture most respectfully to state that it will behove the Commissioners to take such steps as will lead to a radical change in the course and system of instruction at present adopted in National Schools. I touched upon this subject in my General Report for 1858, and although it is not my intention to dwell upon it here, I may be permitted to say that the experience I have had since then, has not materially modified the opinions I expressed in that Report.

30. Next to that of their proficiency, the most important question affecting the pupils of National Schools is their *rate of progress from class to class*. I need not enlarge upon this, because it must be evident to everybody that, if, while the average duration of pupils' attendance at school is only two or three years, the rate of their progress from class to class be so slow as to render a longer period necessary for the completion of the school course, the results must be unsatisfactory, exactly in the proportion of the latter to the former period. In order to deduce any such results from the statistics furnished in the reports of the District Inspectors, several tedious and tiresome calculations would be necessary, and after all, the results would be only approximately true, owing to the peculiar form in which the teachers' annual returns are drawn up. I prefer, therefore, giving here the results of my own experience during the last two years.

Leaving out of consideration a few schools which I visited under peculiarly unfavourable circumstances, I inspected and fully examined in the course of 1859 and 1860, 50 first-class teachers' schools, 61 second-class teachers' schools, 78 third-class teachers' schools, six probationers' schools, making a total of 195 schools, commanding an aggregate average daily attendance of 10,101 pupils. In the case of each school I took a note of the number of promotions that had been made from each class within the 12 months preceeding the date of my inspection, and the following table exhibits the general results:—

	In 59 First Class Teachers' Schools	In 61 Second Class Teachers' Schools	In 78 Third Class Teachers' Schools	In six Pro- bationers' Schools	In 195 Schools.	Per centage of Promotion from each Class.
Number of promotions in Twelve Months from—						
I. Class - - - - -	712	698	722	78	2,112	30.7
II. Class - - - - -	558	571	538	51	1,718	24.2
Special Class - - - - -	544	367	365	25	1,301	22.5
III. Class - - - - -	292	311	155	4	662	11.8
IV. Class - - - - -	54	82	-	-	76	1.6
TOTALS - - - - -	2,456	1,619	1,641	158	5,663	100.
Average daily attendance for Twelve months previous to date of inspection - - -	3,479	3,187	3,378	257	10,101	—
Per-centage of Promotions to average daily attendance - - - - -	59.	54.6	57.9	61.5	56.	—

It appears from this table that, taking one school with another, the number of promotions in 12 months in the 195 National Schools was equivalent to 56 per cent. of the average daily attendance for the same period. How is this result to be interpreted? If one year were the time required on an average for each pupil in average daily attendance to pass from one class into another, or in other words, if each pupil in average daily attendance were detained just one year on an average, in each class, then the number of promotions in a year should be 100 per cent. of the average daily attendance for the same time. If, therefore, the per-centage of the promotions to the average daily attendance be only 59, the inference is, that the time required on an average for each pupil in average daily attendance to pass from one class to a higher, is *two years*; and if, as in the present case, the per-centage were 58, it would show that the average time required was about one year and eight months. Now, if we suppose that at least four such changes are necessary in order to complete the school course (viz., from first-class into second, from second class into sequel, from sequel into third, and from third into fourth class), it is clear that at the last

mentioned rate of progress four times one year and eight months, or nearly seven years, would be required for the purpose.

I may be wrong, but this is my interpretation of the result given above. If the interpretation be correct, and that the rate of progress in schools generally be not more rapid than in those which I have referred to, it is perfectly indisputable that the great majority of our pupils are withdrawn from their respective schools long before they have completed the ordinary school course.

31. *Number of Pupils examined by the District Inspectors.*—The following table, which has been compiled from the Inspectors' Annual Reports, shows the number of pupils examined by them in reading, grammar, geography, writing from dictation, arithmetic, and penmanship, at the primary inspections made by them in 1860.

TABLE showing the number of Pupils examined by the District Inspector :

Districts.	In Reading.	In Grammar.	In Geography.	In Writing from Dictation.	In Arithmetic.	In Penmanship.
Limerick - - - - -	2,645	2,645	2,657	918	2,659	1,949
Newcastle - - - - -	3,147	1,864	2,319	1,082	1,122	1,583
Clovelly - - - - -	2,310	2,467	2,457	1,176	2,667	1,731
Trillick - - - - -	2,942	2,523	2,916	1,064	2,645	2,383
Marazion - - - - -	2,605	2,387	2,107	829	2,247	1,892
Mallow - - - - -	3,037	3,333	3,233	873	2,384	2,000
Killybegs - - - - -	3,151	3,181	3,181	1,888	2,883	2,319
Bantry - - - - -	3,269	2,139	2,139	1,002	2,825	1,882
Dunmurry - - - - -	2,737	1,966	1,868	564	1,896	1,117
Cork - - - - -	2,948	2,027	2,387	1,018	2,507	2,264
Total - - - - -	20,671	23,773	24,579	13,235	24,574	18,640

It thus appears that each of the 10 District Inspectors examined, on the occasions of their primary or complete inspection of their schools in 1860, an average of:—

2,667 pupils in Reading.	3,457 pupils in Arithmetic.
1,844 " Writing.	2,378 " Grammar.
1,633 " Dictation.	2,468 " Geography.

The corresponding averages for 1859 were:—

3,064 pupils in Reading.	2,541 pupils in Arithmetic.
1,910 " Writing.	2,065 " Grammar.
1,967 " Dictation.	2,647 " Geography.

32. *Proficiency of Pupils examined by the District Inspectors.*—The following table shows the centesimal proportion of the pupils examined by the District Inspectors, who were found to have attained, in the estimation of these gentlemen, a satisfactory or fair degree of proficiency in the subjects specified in last section.

	Number of Districts.										Totals.
	01.	02.	03.	04.	05.	06.	07.	08.	09.	10.	
I. READING.											
Able to read :											
(a.) Second Book correctly - - -	68	44	63	48	36	46	48	33	42	43	454
(b.) Third or higher books with ease and intelligence - - - - -	15	26	39	21	31	24	34	18	26	32	254
II. WRITING.											
Able to write on paper :											
(a.) Fairly - - - - -	43	37	53	47	49	38	59	37	66	24	367
(b.) With ease and freedom - - - -	17	12	36	24	33	24	12	11	16	8	186
III. DICTATION.											
Able to write a sentence :											
(a.) With tolerable accuracy - - -	43	39	42	47	33	29	27	49	48	34	343
(b.) With ease and correctness - -	14	17	36	29	46	38	27	8	15	10	243

	Number of Districts.										TOTAL.
	31.	32.	33.	34.	35.	36.	37.	38.	39.	40.	
IV. ARITHMETIC.											
Proficient in—											
(a.) Notation in seven places - - -	35	28	18	21	38	39	43	49	36	29	35.1
(b.) Simple subtraction - - - - -	62	19	79	77	63	45	53	35	39	66	52.6
(c.) Division of money - - - - -	25	22	42	42	27	34	36	21	34	28	28.7
(d.) Properties or practice - - - - -	14	16	26	22	16	13	35	20	11	18	17.1
V. GRAMMAR.											
Able to—											
(a.) Distinguish parts of speech only -	10	35	16	40	40	29	17	44	32	34	34.6
(b.) Parse systematically - - - - -	6	19	35	15	10	13	10	23	7	17	15.0
VI. GEOGRAPHY.											
Acquainted with—											
(a.) Outlines of map of World only - -	54	24	62	33	48	35	36	55	30	58	39.2
(b.) Map of Europe or Ireland - - -	7	17	20	21	11	9	18	36	6	17	16.5
(c.) General course of Geography - - -	1	3	11	15	2	0.5	1	-	0.5	2	3.8

The general results deducible from this table are:—

(a.) That of 29,671 pupils examined in reading by the Inspectors, 45.4 per cent. were considered able to read a lesson in the Second Book "correctly," (i.e. without mistaking words, or overlooking pauses); and 25.1 per cent. able to read the Third or higher books "with ease and intelligence." These two per-centages combined show that 70.5 per cent. of the total number of pupils examined were considered by the Inspectors to have acquired a satisfactory or fair degree of proficiency in reading. The corresponding percentage in 1859 was 69.5. In 1858 it was 67.3.

(b.) That of 18,440 pupils examined in penmanship, 59.7 per cent. were considered able to write on paper "fairly," and 18.6 per cent. "with ease and freedom." These two per-centages combined show that 58.3 per cent. of the total number of pupils examined in writing, were considered to have acquired a satisfactory or fair degree of proficiency in that branch. The corresponding percentage in 1859 was 58; and in 1858 it was 60.5.

(c.) That of 10,386 pupils examined in writing from dictation, 35.3 per cent. were considered able to write a sentence from dictation "with tolerable accuracy," and 24.3 per cent. "with ease and correctness." These two per-centages combined show that 59.6 per cent. of the total number of pupils examined in writing from dictation were considered to have acquired a satisfactory or fair degree of proficiency in that branch. The corresponding percentage in 1859 was 62.8. In 1858 it was 66.3.

(d.) That of 24,574 pupils examined in arithmetic, 35.1 per cent. were considered to have attained to a satisfactory or fair proficiency in notation and numeration; 52.6 per cent. in simple subtraction, 28 per cent. in compound division, and 17.1 per cent. in proportion or practice. The corresponding percentages for the two preceding years were:—

Notation - - - - -	31.6 in 1859, and 29.6 in 1858.
Simple Subtraction - - - - -	50.7 " and 48.6 "
Compound Division - - - - -	28.5 " and 22.8 "
Proportion, &c. - - - - -	15.3 " and 10.3 "

(e.) That of 23,779 pupils examined in grammar, 34.6 per cent. were considered able to distinguish the parts of speech only; and 15.3 per cent. to parse a sentence according to the rules of syntax. Thus, 49.9 per cent. of the total number examined were considered to have attained to a satisfactory or fair proficiency in grammar. In 1859 the percentage was 47.8; and 45.2 in 1858.

(f.) That of 24,679 pupils examined in geography, 39.2 per cent. were found acquainted with "the outlines of the map of the world only;" 16.5 per cent. with "the map of Europe or of Ireland;" and 3.6 per cent. with "a general course of geography." Combining these three percentages, we find that 59 per cent. of the total number examined in geography were considered by the Inspectors to have acquired a satisfactory or fair amount of proficiency in that branch. In 1859 the percentage was 62.6. In 1858 it was 61.1.

From the foregoing it appears that, on the whole, the proficiency of the pupils examined by the District Inspectors on the occasions of their primary inspections of schools in 1860, was somewhat higher in reading, grammar, and arithmetic; and somewhat lower in penmanship, writing from dictation, and geography, than in either of the two preceding years.

V.—Inspection.

35. The following table shows the total number of visits, incidental or other, to National Schools, made by the Inspectors of my group of Districts during the year 1860, and also the number of schools inspected:—

TABLE.

	Number of Districts.									
	51.	52.	53.	54.	55.	56.	57.	58.	59.	60.
Number of—										
Primary Inspections - - - -	82	92	83	86	90	77	80	70	*	92
Secondary Inspections - - - -	164	199	161	166	180	178	177	154	*	149
Incidental visits - - - -	239	77	28	94	27	99	29	23	*	7
Total number of visits - - - -	485	368	272	346	304	294	286	257	*	248
Number of Schools—										
Inspected three times in year - - -	81	98	72	58	92	77	65	47	3	35
Inspected twice only - - - -	1	1	7	36	-	19	14	31	79	67
Inspected once only - - - -	-	2	1	-	1	2	-	7	7	2
Inspected not more than once - - -	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	7	-
Visited occasionally - - - -	49	77	29	22	54	37	15	38	*	7
Evening schools reported on - - - -	2	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	1
Total number of visits made by each Inspector in 1859 - - - -	489	346	259	279	326	379	234	247	390	308

It appears from this table (a) that the average number of visits, incidental or other, made to National Schools during 1860 by each of the nine Inspectors who had been on duty for the entire year, was 507 (in 1859 the average was 318); (b) that the average number of full inspections made by each was 252 (in 1859 the average was 257); (c) that the average number of incidental visits made by each was 55 (in 1859 the average was 81).

There are two or three points of great importance in connection with the question of inspection, upon which I had intended to express my views at some length in this Report. I find, however, that I could not do justice to them without trespassing to an unreasonable extent upon the indulgence of the Commissioners, upon which I have already drawn very largely. I shall therefore reserve the subject for another occasion.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

John E. Sheridan, Head Inspector.

The Secretaries, Education Office, Dublin.

APPENDIX to GENERAL REPORT for 1860 upon the State and Prospects of National Education in Districts 51-60, by John E. Sheridan, Head Inspector.

In this Appendix I propose to give such extracts from the Annual Reports for 1860, furnished by the District Inspectors, as will suffice to make the Commissioners acquainted with the opinions and views entertained by these gentlemen upon the following points:—

- A.—The distribution of the schools in relation to population.
- B.—The nature and amount of accommodation in the schools.
- C.—The state of schools, generally, as to supply of Lesson Books and other school requisites.
- D.—The character of the pupils' attendance throughout the year, as regards regularity or irregularity.
- E.—The proficiency of the pupils examined by the District Inspectors during the year.
- F.—The feeling of local parties with regard to the National Schools.
- G.—The state and prospects of education generally, as regards schools and their teachers.

I think it right to premise, however, that in consequence of the great length to which my own report has unavoidably extended, and in consequence, too, of the great length of the observations made by some of the Inspectors under the foregoing and several other heads, it will be strictly necessary for me to limit myself to comparatively brief extracts. I shall endeavour, nevertheless, not to omit anything that may be needful to convey a just notion of the views entertained by the Inspectors regarding the important points specified above.

* The Inspector of District 59 being on leave of absence, in consequence of delicate health, the returns referring to his district are imperfect.

A.—Distribution of the National Schools: does it accord with the Distribution of the Population?

The object of this query, as I understand it, in the form of annual report for district inspectors, is to elicit information as to whether the national schools are situate in localities populous enough to furnish in each case a sufficient average daily attendance. In this sense the query may be said to have been answered affirmatively by all the inspectors, for, according to their returns, the number of schools commanding an annual average daily attendance of *less than 50 pupils*, is very small in most of the districts. In the Mallow and Bantry Districts, however, one-fourth of the schools, and in the Killarney District one-fifth, appear to be of this class. In the other districts such schools average about 12 per cent. of the total number; and I may add that most of these small schools are extremely useful. But the inspectors generally answer this query as if its object was to ascertain whether the existing schools were sufficient to supply the educational wants of the populations of their respective districts, and they agree in stating that they are more or less insufficient.

Mr. O'Collegan, Limerick District.—"There are some localities in which the attendance is unusually large, and where additional schools, conveniently placed, might be advantageously established."

Mr. Robinson, Newcastle District.—"In my previous reports I had occasion to note the inadequacy of the supply of national schools, when compared with the population of this district. I am sorry to be unable to record in this report any very marked increase in their number during the past year. From a due consideration of all the circumstances that bear upon the matter, I have come to the conclusion that at least 150 schools are necessary to supply the educational wants of the people in those portions of Cork, Kerry, and Limerick, over which I am placed. There are, however, just now but 98 on the roll, leaving a deficiency of 52 to be provided from time to time. Three schools were added in 1858, one in 1859, and four in 1860 (not reckoning seven applications for new schools as yet undecided by the Commissioners, but which I have every reason to hope will be favourably considered). This gives on an average an increase yearly of about three—an increase very small indeed when the importance of the question is considered, but still an increase. I expect to commence 1861 with 105 schools on the roll, and I hope that many of the 45 schools which will then remain to be provided, will be established during the year. These 45 schools are necessary for three important reasons—(1), to provide the means of education in districts hitherto totally neglected; (2), to diminish the attendance at overcrowded schools already in existence; and (3), to promote regularity of attendance by withdrawing some of the most important of the agencies which tend to retard it."

Mr. O'Loughlin, Mallow District.—"Additional schools are required in some localities; but, so far from thinking that any of these already established are superfluous, I am convinced that if there were active management and efficient teaching, such as are now suspended might soon be re-opened. Three, however, have been provided within the past year, and two more only await the appointment of teachers. Others are in contemplation."

Mr. Macmenara, Killarney District.—"The distribution of the National Schools in this district may be considered to accord on the whole justly with the distribution of the population. When the projected National Schools vested in Commissioners (13 in number) shall have been erected, the educational requirements of the district will be more fully satisfied. In addition to the projected schools to be vested in the Commissioners, there will soon be ready for opening two new school buildings, to contain male and female departments, which are in process of erection, at the sole expense of Lord Castlerosse. His Lordship intends to place these schools, when in operation, in connexion with the Commissioners. It may be stated that at no distant period the educational wants of the entire district will be amply supplied as respects the number of National Schools in it."

Mr. Sheehy, Cork District.—"In the country parts of my district the distribution of the National Schools agrees very well with the distribution of the population. But in the city of Cork they are too few in proportion to that part of the population for which the National Schools were intended. However, there are a great many, and some of them very large, schools not connected with the National Board, that supply in a great measure the want of National Schools. I mentioned in my report for 1859 that three schools under the management of a clergyman of the Established Church were taken into connexion at the close of that year; and I have now to state that they are in a flourishing condition, affording a good English education in the city of Cork, to about 200 children, chiefly of the Established Church, and exhibiting to those who visit them, and attend the examinations held in them, very fair specimens of National Schools under an active and zealous manager."

B.—Nature and Amount of Accommodation in the Schools.

Mr. O'Callaghan, Limerick District.—"The accommodation for all the schools, except the Model, Convent, and Workhouse Schools, is compelled in one room. In a few there is a porch attached, in which are fittings for hanging caps and cloaks. In most of the schools there is not sufficient space clear for class teaching, even on the bipartite method of conducting the business."

Mr. Robinson, Newcastle District.—"Out of 96 schools in operation in my district, no less than 25, or over 30 per cent., were originally built either for a farmer's residence, or in imitation of his barn. Two of these 25 were actually stables, and one a stable left, to enter which the children must pass through a very filthy farmyard. The walls of these houses are almost always low, and in many cases built of mud. The roof is thatched, and the windows are of that small and bad description common to the peasants' houses of the country. In fact, instead of the former imitating the buildings of an institution supported by the State, these buildings appear to have been designed after the models the farmer himself supplies. Of the remaining schools, most appear as if they had been specially designed, however imperfectly that design is accomplished, for their present use. Some few of them are very ornamental, and their sites picturesque and healthy. Others, again, could be made to appear neat and tasteful by a little attention on the part of the teachers; and I regret to record that these officers are anything but careful in the arrangements of their school grounds. They never think of planting a few ornamental shrubs, or a few flowers, or of forming a grass-plot before the door. They are not hindered by the expense; they act partly from the uncertainty of their position, but principally from a deficiency of taste, and from believing that things are very well as they are. I propose during my next tour of inspection to obtain the managers' influence to effect this object; and in the cases where I hope to be successful, I shall recommend the grant of a premium to encourage their own efforts, and stimulate others to similar ones."

Under this head of school accommodation, Mr. Robinson has made the following remarks in reference to residences for teachers:—

"I am not an advocate for the teacher's residence being actually attached to the school-house. I think the residence should always be about a quarter or half a mile distant. When under the same roof there is a strong temptation to go out and in for a few moments now and then during the day, even with men and women who are unmarried; but in the case of women who have families to attend to, the temptation is so very strong that it must be yielded to, to the detriment of the public service. Farther than the distance I mention would be productive in many cases of considerable inconvenience. Half a mile is the most suitable distance, as it not only sufficiently prevents the temptation to visit home occasionally during the day, and is free from inconveniences arising from over-fatigue, &c., but from his tending to keep the teachers healthy. A walk of half a mile before and after school promotes bodily vigour; and there is no office, purely literary, in which bodily vigour is more necessary to success than that of the teacher. But that a house of some sort should be provided for every teacher, is in my mind absolutely necessary. It tends not only to obtain, but also to retain good officers. Living in lodgings destroys the freedom of the teacher, and prevents his studying satisfactorily. In towns, a man may obtain lodgings in which he can command sufficient privacy; but in the farm-houses of the country such is quite impossible. In many parts of this district the teachers are unable to procure any fixed residences whatever. They are forced to move from one farmer's house to another, and teach the children of each after-hours, as compensation for the accommodation thus afforded. In such cases the study which is necessary for their own advancement, and a fit discharge of their daily duties, is out of their power. . . . In respect to the dwellings of the teachers, we are now quite as we were many years ago. While the national system has been gradually improving, and gradually throwing aside the various clogs that retarded its progress, that very material obstacle supplied by the condition of the teachers' dwelling-houses has been overlooked. The influence of home upon him, as a moral and literary educationist, has not been sufficiently considered. We have had regard to his mental skill merely, and we have almost entirely passed over the circumstances under which alone that skill can be fully called into effective existence. . . . Last year was productive of a movement in favour of 'improved dwellings for the poor'; it would be well were it to embrace 'improved dwellings for the teachers.' The Commissioners in their Report for 1835 state—'we are also of opinion that teachers should be furnished with apartments adjoining the school'; I hope that some steps may eventually be taken to carry out what they thus approve of. I would recommend that dwellings should be built adjoining every vested school. The State, I think, should contribute to what I have endeavoured to show exercises a very strong influence over its interests."

Mr. Lender, Clonmel District.—"The accommodation is in general sufficient. The Killusty National School is the only one too small for the numbers sometimes in attendance."

Mr. Nixon, Trillick District.—"In the convent, workhouse, and vested schools, the amount of accommodation is in general sufficient for all school purposes; while in the non-vested schools it is in several instances much too small."

Mr. Barrett, Macroom District.—“Considerable improvement has taken place in this particular during the past year, and this improvement is almost entirely due to the kind and judicious aid given by Vere Foster, Esq. Several of the school-houses in this district have had their floors boarded, their walls lined with boards, and their general suitability improved by these grants; and in consequence of these improvements, nearly half of the school-houses now afford accommodation which, so far as it goes, is suitable; but the amount is not at all sufficient for the number of pupils in attendance.”

Mr. O’Loughlin, Mallow District.—“Some of the schools are overcrowded. Some suspended for want of a sufficient number of pupils in attendance; but in the great majority of cases, the accommodation and attendance are fairly proportioned.”

Mr. Macnamara, Killybegs District.—“On the whole, it is satisfactory to be able to state that the amount of rooms and accommodation in the school-houses of this district is adequate to suit the convenience of the teachers, &c.”

Mr. Hickey, Bantry District.—“The accommodation in the schools is fairly proportioned to the attendance of the pupils, except Dawrus male and female, Rosnacowen male and female, and Tulloha male and female, which, though vested schools, in my opinion, require to be enlarged.”

Mr. Sheehy, Cork District.—“Omitting the Poor Law Union and Prison Schools, as also two others that have been closed some time, the average attendance in each school of the district has been 81·6 for the past twelve months, and the average accommodation of each for the same period 120. In one of the schools, however, the average equalled the number that could be accommodated, and in ten it exceeded it. All of these schools, with a single exception (St. Nicholas Convent School, Cork), are situate in villages or the country parts of the district.”

C.—State of Schools generally, as to Supply of Lesson Books and other School Requisites at Reduced Prices, for Sale to Pupils.

The Inspectors in charge of the Limerick, Tralee, Macroom, Mallow, Killybegs, and Bantry Districts, report that, on the whole, their schools were kept fairly supplied with books and other requisites during the year 1860.

Mr. Robinson, Newcastle District.—“We should consider—(1), is a bad supply of books and stationery for sale to the children an evil? (2), does it exist? and (3), can it be removed by the powers vested in the Commissioners? As to the first, it is scarcely necessary to produce any arguments to prove that a bad supply of books and stationery is an evil. It is self-evident that the business of writing, dictation, arithmetic, reading, &c., cannot go on satisfactorily or in an orderly manner without a regular and adequate supply of books, pens, slates, and paper. . . . The question now arises, does that evil exist in the majority of National Schools? I answer now, as I have done for several years past, that unfortunately it does. In proof of this, I beg to state, that for the year 1860, the total amount of books and requisites purchased, at reduced rates, was only 196 l. 13 s., being an average of about 3 d. for each child passing through the school. In the total sum, however, is included the money paid for clocks, spelling and reading tablets, arithmetical cards, maps, &c., for use in the schools. If this were deducted we should find that the amount of books for sale to each child was about 2 d. This fully proves how exceedingly inadequate the supply was. . . . Lastly, can the evil be removed by the machinery which the Commissioners can call into force? It is clear that the method of checking the evil just now practised cannot succeed. For 1858 the amount was about 3 d. for each child. It was 3½ d. in 1859, while it is barely 3 d. in 1860, showing a decline instead of an improvement. When a school is reported as badly supplied with books, the manager receives a letter from the office, trusting that he will be good enough to provide a sufficient stock for sale; but the manager seldom or never pays the slightest attention to this letter, and there the matter ends. At the next visit a similar letter is written, which is similarly treated. If this system be continued, the same result will always follow. . . . My impression is, that the duty will never be done until the teachers do it. Until a punishment is attached to a bad supply of books, just as to bad answering or to a want of cleanliness, or to any of the other matters which interfere with the propriety of the school. I am aware that this will press inconveniently upon some; and I am also aware that the burden should, in strict justice, fall upon the managers; but the interest of the schools are so much sacrificed by the present arrangements, that a change is imperatively called for; and the one now proposed, if not the most correct, appears to me to be the most practicable. The burden would not be a great increase to that which they already bear; for though under the present rules the duty is nominally the manager’s, the discharge of it is virtually performed by the teachers. I would recommend, however, as I have done before, that special premiums should be set aside for rewarding those who perform this duty most satisfactorily.”

Mr. Lender, Clonmel District.—“Of the eighty-four National Schools in operation in this district, I found, during last term, sixty sufficiently supplied with requisites for sale to pupils, and twenty-one not sufficiently supplied; three are Poor Law Union Schools, which are well supplied with requisites, but of course not for sale.”

Mr. Sheehy, Cork District.—“Twenty-five good, forty-eight fair, twenty-two middling, and seven bad. The amount of books and requisites, not including apparatus, purchased by eighty-two town and rural schools during the past twelve months, is 252 l. 10 s., or 3 l. 1 s. 7 d. on an average by each. There are nine other schools, however, which

received no sale stock during the same period; but of these, five were supplied from some of those that I first mentioned. The reasons usually assigned by teachers for not sending for books is want of means, though others not so well paid keep their schools supplied. Were the teachers to inspect the pupils' books every morning when examining as to cleanliness, there would be more care taken of them, and the lower classes would be better supplied than they have been hitherto.*

D.—Character of the Pupils' Attendance throughout the year, whether Regular or Irregular.

Mr. O'Callaghan, Limerick District.—“There has been no change in the character of the attendance as described for former years. The same causes still exist to render it fluctuating, of which the principal is the occupation of the children in farm or factory work.”

Mr. Robinson, Newcastle District.—“There is no change for 1860, as compared with 1859.”

Mr. Lawler, Clonmel District.—“Owing to the unfavourable weather for harvest operations, the attendance, during the last term of the year, was very irregular.”

Mr. Nixon, Tredan District.—“In consequence of the unusually wet summer many of the younger children were unable to attend, and during the autumn months the older pupils were obliged to remain at home to assist in harvest operations, owing to the scarcity of labourers, and to the high rate of wages that must now be paid them.”

Mr. Barrett, Macroom District.—“Attendance, as in previous years, is, on the whole, irregular. In the town schools it is pretty regular; but in the rural schools, which constitute the vast majority of the schools in this district, the attendance is subject to considerable fluctuation, caused chiefly by the demand for assistance in agricultural operations in spring and autumn, the severity of the weather in spring and winter, and the prevalence of epidemic diseases at various seasons throughout the year.”

Mr. O'Leahy, Mallow District.—“Irregular. The scarcity of hands for agricultural labour, and the readiness of parents to employ their children at such, even when not necessary, may be set down as standing causes of irregularity of attendance. And during the past year they have been unusually active in their operation in consequence of the unfavourable seasons, which obliged the farmers to be constantly on the watch for a moment of fine weather, and to have all, young and old, ready to turn it to account in saving the perishing harvest. In the rural districts, therefore, the progress of the schools has not been so marked as in former years. In the towns there is the usual drawback: the chronic negligence of the parents.”

Mr. Macanavan, Killarney District.—“Throughout the year the character of the attendance of the pupils was, as in past years, irregular. The irregularity arose from the same causes as were described in former reports, viz., the necessity of attending to agricultural operations, increased by the scarcity of labourers, various accidental circumstances, as epidemics, bad weather, the necessity of attending to religious instruction, and other causes. Against the impediment of irregular attendance National Education is destined to struggle permanently in this district, as the removal of its main causes is a social impossibility.”

Mr. Hickey, Bantry District.—“Nothing very remarkable observed in this respect. The attendance as to regularity maintained a fair average character.”

Mr. Sheehy, Cork District.—“The pupils, on the whole, were more regular in their attendance during the past year than the one preceding it; but in the morning they have not attended more punctually, except in the cases of organized schools, and a few others. Even in organized schools the morning attendance fluctuates very much once the organizer has left them, and from no other cause I know of than that the teachers neglect to carry out the practical hints given them with the view of securing punctuality of attendance. One of the teachers in my district tells me he adopted the following plan to secure regular attendance in the morning. He got one of the pupils to take down the names of those who came late, and the number of minutes they were late, and kept them in the evening twice as many minutes after the others were dismissed. Repeating this experiment a few days in succession, he found it so successful that he has no occasion for continuing it.”

E.—General Observations as to Proficiency of Pupils found in attendance at Inspection made during the year.

Mr. O'Callaghan, Limerick District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation:—

“Spelling from dictation, with explanation of meanings, is taught fairly in the schools; it is found the most effective method of advancing the intelligence of the first class. With respect to reading, the success consists chiefly in the acquirement of ease and fluency, scarcely any regard being paid to the principles of a correct and expressive style. It must be owned, that the teachers themselves are almost incapable of giving their pupils just notions on this subject, their own manner of reading being, for the most part, disfigured by gross infirmities of the laws of accent and of emphasis. I have not yet met, in any of the schools, a pupil able to read or to recite, with ordinary taste or propriety, a passage

from

from any of the pieces of poetry given in the lesson books. I propose, during the present year, to bring this great deficiency specially under the notice of the teachers.

"I shall require, on future visits, from the senior classes an acquaintance with the leading principles laid down in the Literary Class Book for correct reading.

"*Penmanship*—The inability of the teachers to give scientific or methodical instruction in this branch is deserving of notice; their own performances in penmanship are extremely inexact and inelegant; there are only three teachers in this district capable of executing a piece of penmanship in a finished and schoolmasterlike style. It must be admitted that few of them write in a manner superior to that common amongst the farming class about them. The consequence is, that examples of questions in arithmetic or mensuration, or the sets of book-keeping entered on paper by the pupils, are generally most discreditably performances. In such exercises, therefore, the opportunity thus offered for impressing the pupils with ideas of neatness and uniformity is mainly neglected. Of the different methodical plans, laid down by skilful educationists, of teaching this important branch, many of the teachers are totally ignorant. I sometimes ask them to point out in the copy-books of their pupils even a single letter formed in accordance with strict rules, or the principles of proportion given in works on the subject, and the inquiry urges them to a scrutiny which very often ends in utter failure. The results, however, of this unsystematic direction are not so unsatisfactory as might be expected. Many of the pupils, by sheer perseverance in efforts to imitate the copy-lines, succeed in acquiring a style of writing sufficient for the requirements of the common business transactions of country life. Very few, except in Model Schools, are found to attain to a style at once elegant and exact, or at all proficient in aids for decoration afforded by the practice of ornamental penmanship. These remarks apply to the male pupils only; in the female schools the results are generally very satisfactory. I beg to recommend that at future examinations of the male teachers, that, in addition to what is now required of them, to write some word in large hand, they should be asked to exhibit the same word in Roman letters, and in those of the German text.

"*Arithmetic*—I have to notice decided progress made in this branch during the past year. The principles of the science are beginning to receive more attention, having been heretofore too generally neglected. In the practice, too, improvement is discernible in the adoption of the neater and more concise methods of solution. The teachers, however, are not yet sufficiently careful in requiring from their pupils due attention to the neatness or symmetry of the operations on the slates, a neglect which results in an aggravated disfigurement of the work when exhibited on paper. I have pointed out to the teachers the use of the black board as a remedy for this defect. The teacher, or one of the pupils of the class under his immediate direction, should exhibit in correct form on the black board, in the presence of the whole class, an example under the particular rule in which they are to be instructed; a subsequent examination of the slates to ascertain the strict coincidence in form of the pupils' work with that on the black board, would be thus made an intelligible task.

"*Writing from Dictation*.—This branch is now taught on correct principles. Mr. Sheridan, in his Report for the year 1858, drew attention to the mode of conducting this exercise generally adopted by the teachers, which, he remarked, must be regarded rather as a method of testing the actual proficiency of the pupils, than one calculated to advance their proficiency;—that in fact, it was examining in, and not teaching the subject. Impressed with his views, I introduced the plan suggested by him into all the schools of the district. The experiment has been most successful wherever it has been made intelligently, and faithfully carried out. I have also suggested to the teachers the advantage of conducting the exercises once a week, at least, on paper, and not to restrict their supervision to the corrections of the spelling, but to extend it to other points—neat and careful writing, proper division of the syllables at the end of the line, &c. I have also recommended them to keep a special book for recording the errors in spelling made in the daily exercises, and to make these errors the subject matter of subsequent dictation, either by sentences formed by the teacher himself to contain most of the mis-spelled words; or simply by obliging the pupils to write each of them five or six times, until the eye becomes perfectly familiar with the correct form. I intended to give special attention to this branch, and feel confident that I shall be able in my next Report to announce gratifying results in regard to this important and most interesting part of the school programme.

"*Grammar*.—Pretty fairly taught. It must be admitted, however, that the pupils, in parsing sentences, use in too many instances grammatical terms without clearly understanding their meaning; a vigilant exercise of judgment is not sufficiently stimulated. I have recommended, as an occasional exercise for the senior classes, the correction by pupils themselves on slate or paper, of examples of ungrammatical sentences given in our school grammars.

"*Geography*.—The proficiency in this subject is fairly satisfactory. Some of the teachers possess far more tact and information than others, in making the lessons on the maps both interesting and instructive. The information given in the text books, as to historical events, natural history, commerce, &c., is too frequently neglected. I have brought this defect specially under the notice of many of the teachers."

Mr. Robinson, Newcastle District, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation:—

"There is an improvement perceptible in the character of the reading as returned for 1860 when compared with 1859.

"Penmanship.—The numbers for 1860 show an improvement.

"*Arithmetic*.—An improvement perceptible in notation, and a marked improvement in compound rules and proportion, but, I regret to add, a falling off in simple subtraction. I shall pay attention to this defect during next year.

"*Writing from Dictation*.—In this there has been a considerable decrease of efficiency. It may be partially accounted for by my having conducted the examinations during 1860 on paper. Although an exercise so conducted forms the most correct test, it also forms the most difficult one. I have also found that there are nearly as many—in some schools a greater number—ranked under the head of 'care and correctness' as under the inferior head of 'tolerable accuracy.' I argue from this that writing from dictation is principally taught to the senior classes only, and that the third class children practice it at rare intervals.

"*Grammar*.—In this subject a considerable improvement is perceptible, but a great part of this also may be accounted for by my exclusion of second class, during the 'Primary' examination, from the grammar class. In 1859 I examined them under the head of 'Parts of Speech,' but as they are only required to know three of these, I thought it advisable to exclude them entirely in 1860 from the examination at which I tabulated the answering. During the other two examinations I tested their answering in this as in other subjects.

"*Geography*.—The answering appears to have declined under the first and third heads, and to have improved under the second head. The greatest falling off was under the head of 'Outlines of the Map of the World.' I shall devote my attention to the removal of this defect during 1861.

Mr. Lister, Clonmel District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation:

"Fair attention is in general paid to this branch, in which the proficiency is, on the whole, satisfactory. There are, however, a few schools in which, the teachers having great mathematical, sufficient importance is not attached to reading and explanation. In one of these schools lately I found the pupils of the fourth class very ignorant of the meaning of the words occurring in their lesson, and, as a natural consequence, very bad, unintelligent readers. Young children, being taught to read and spell from the commencement, learn to read the first book of lessons in a very short time. Spelling sentences orally is practised with good effect in all the schools by all the classes.

"*Penmanship*.—On the whole, the penmanship throughout the district is better than I found it in any district in which I had been previously located. In some schools it is excellent, the teachers of which are excellent writers themselves. In no branch taught in our schools is the teacher's manner so closely imitated as in this. If he be a good penman, so, in general, will be his pupils; and if he be a bad one, his example will be copied by his pupils, and grow into a habit which it will be almost impossible to get rid of ever after. Good penmanship, therefore, should be looked upon as a very important qualification in a National School teacher.

"*Arithmetic*.—The proficiency in this branch is, in general, satisfactory throughout the District, as regards the practice; but as regards the theory of numbers, and the rationale of the rules of arithmetic, much still requires to be done. Having directed the attention of the teachers to this part of the subject, I expect that I shall next year have the satisfaction to report considerable improvement in it, at least among the higher classes.

"*Writing from Dictation*.—Fair attention is paid to this branch, and the improvement made in it within the year has been on the whole very satisfactory.

"*Grammar*.—This is the great stumbling-block. In correct parsing, all the schools, not excepting even the Clonmel Model School, were, until lately, very deficient. During last term of this year, I found the parsing in general good, but, strange to say, many good parsers had forgotten the definitions of grammar, owing, I cannot help thinking, to the fact, that there are two different text-books on the subject used in our schools—the words of one confusing those of the other in the minds of the pupils and teachers. The method of conjugating and parsing the verb too, in both, being different from that of Murray, which is generally recommended by the Inspectors, is another source of great embarrassment to both pupils and teachers. To obviate these inconveniences, the use of one text-book on grammar, and a uniform method of parsing, should be insisted on in all the National Schools.

"*Geography*.—Except in a few schools this subject is well taught in the district.

Mr. Nisze,

Mr. NIXON, Tralee District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation :—

" In many schools the reading was unsatisfactory, owing principally to a bad accent and incorrect pronunciation ; and I have constantly endeavoured, in the course of my inspection, to impress upon the teachers that the highest importance is attached to good reading, and that, therefore, they should give the reading their most careful attention. After finishing the reading lesson, the pupils of each class are exercised in oral spelling and in explanation of words: In oral spelling the answer is usually respectable, but in the meaning of words, great deficiency is frequently shown.

" *Pennmanship.*—Writing is taught with much care in this part of the country, and with few exceptions, both teachers and pupils write well ; in the convent schools particularly, the writing of the senior classes is excellent, both as regards execution and style. It would, in my opinion, be a very great improvement, and would also economise much time, if the copy books were so prepared as to have the precedent or copy line at the top of each page, and similar to those now in use in many respectable schools in large towns, but which are not in connexion with the National Board.

" *Arithmetic.*—In too many cases this branch is not taught with that degree of care that the subject requires. It is made a dry exercise of the memory, and pupils are not unfrequently found unable to account for the several steps of the process in some of the simplest questions in the compound rules and proportion, much less to give anything like the reason of the rule by which such questions are solved. It has always been my object, in examining upon this most necessary branch of knowledge, to see that the pupils are well grounded in the elementary principles, and are made to possess a correct notion of notation and numeration, as well as to have been made acquainted with the more useful tables ; and this much once acquired, the study of arithmetic, under a judicious teacher, becomes to the youthful mind a profitable and a pleasing intellectual exercise.

" *Writing from Dictation.*—The importance of correct spelling being now so generally known and felt by all classes of society, writing from dictation is receiving a due share of attention in the greater part of the schools under my charge, and the pupils of about the two-thirds of them are able to write any ordinary passages from the Third or Fourth Books very fairly. The ' Spelling Book Superadded,' used in the National Schools, has contributed much to improvement in orthography in all the schools throughout the country.

" *Grammar.*—Grammar, though so necessary in order to pass respectably through the world, is not so well understood as might be expected. Only the pupils of about half the number of schools in my district have a tolerably correct knowledge of the subject, and even many of these, when subjected to a searching examination, betray great ignorance of the application of the rules and principles of grammar. Composition should be more extensively taught, and the pupils of the fourth class, at least, should be required occasionally to write a short essay on a given subject, to be named by the teacher ; these exercises should be carefully examined by him in the presence of the whole class, and mistakes pointed out, at the same time explaining to the pupils what rules have been violated. It is only in this way—by a proper application of its rules—that grammar ever will be understood with profit by those to whom it is taught.

" *Geography.*—This part of the school course, geography, is very carefully taught by the teachers in general, and to a fair proportion of the pupils in attendance at their respective schools. The large maps granted by the Board are chiefly used in teaching the junior classes, which classes are usually instructed by lecture and subsequent interrogation. The study of mathematical geography, even the elementary portion, is in a great measure confined to those schools in which a fourth or a fifth class is to be found. The third, fourth, and fifth classes, make use of text-books, and are also instructed by lecture and interrogation."

Mr. BARRITT, Macroom District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation :—

" The general proficiency in this branch is middling ; the reading of the pupils of the third and lower classes, in most of the schools, is characterized by uncertainty, monotony, and mispronunciation. In the fourth and higher classes, however, a large number of pupils have acquired a fair and useful amount of proficiency. In oral spelling, the answering, generally, has been very fair, and in many schools, the rules for spelling are fairly known ; but in explanation of meanings of words and sentences, the general proficiency is very unsatisfactory. The meanings of a large number of the words in the Lesson Books are not understood by the pupils, and many teachers are unable to explain them. Neither teachers nor pupils refer to the dictionary for the meanings of the words they do not understand ; and even if they did, they would seldom be able to select the meaning suitable to the word, in the sense in which it is used in the sentence before them. I would, therefore, suggest to the Board to consider the expediency of having marginal or parenthetical explanations of some of the words of the lessons, given in the next edition of the Lesson Books. The word " climate " in the lesson on Europe in Third Book, is an instance of the sort of explanation to which I allude."

Penmanship.—The general proficiency in this branch is only middling; in the higher classes in the female schools, and in some of the male schools (six), the penmanship is fair, and a large number of the pupils have acquired a very useful amount of proficiency; but in the greater number of schools this branch is not well taught, and the proficiency is unsatisfactory.

Arithmetic.—In practical arithmetic, the general proficiency is fair; but in the theory of arithmetic, the proficiency is not satisfactory. The teachers have much difficulty in raising the proficiency in the theory of this branch, as they have to begin with definitions, and many of those within their reach are by no means accurate. The teachers, however, devote considerable attention to the subject, and the principles of the rules are consequently coming to be pretty fairly known.

Writing from Dictation.—The proficiency in this branch is very fair. In many schools in which there are no fourth or higher classes, and but few pupils in third class, the proficiency in this branch is low; but in schools, in which there are fourth or higher classes, the proficiency is pretty good. In the principal schools in the district, I have found the advanced classes so expert in this branch that I did not consider it necessary that they should continue to devote much more of their time to it. I therefore suggested that, instead of writing from dictation, they should write from memory the substance of some lesson previously learned by them. This practice, I consider, would improve their spelling as much as writing from dictation would; would also improve their knowledge of the Lesson Books, and, what is greatly needed, would improve their style of composition. The suggestion was acted on for some time in all the schools in which it was made, but it has been followed out in only two. In the Macroom Male School an exercise of this kind is given every Friday, and in the Millstreet Female School the nuns teach composition with perseverance, earnestness, and success.

Grammar.—General proficiency pretty fair. A large number of pupils can distinguish the parts of speech, and many can parse sentences syntactically, and explain intelligently the corrections of ungrammatical expressions in their localities—such as ‘Give me them books!’ ‘Says I!’ ‘Who are them?’ ‘I am here for the last hour!’ ‘He told the story to you and I!’ &c. But the pupils generally leave school about the age at which they can make most progress in this subject.

Geography.—General proficiency pretty fair. In local geography the proficiency is very fair; the subject extensively taught from maps, and, owing to the excellence of those furnished by the Board, the pupils generally have a very fair knowledge of the relative positions of places. The higher classes of the male schools are not without some knowledge of the principles of mathematical geography, but the statistical portion of political geography is not satisfactorily known.

Mr. O’Leahy, Millrow District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation:—

‘Generally speaking, the reading is coarse, monotonous, and mechanical. Many of the teachers pronounce incorrectly—still more do the pupils. This, however, is only a secondary defect, though still an important one. What I mainly find fault with is, that the pupils repeat the words without understanding either the individual or collective sense of them. Hence, it is, that as reading is the source of most of their knowledge, the latter is the same half-understood thing as the former.’

Penmanship.—As writing is a purely mechanical operation, the main things essential to success in it are proper appliances, taste, and practice. The last is amply provided for by the every-day arrangements of the schools. Taste, in a matter where there is room for so little variety, is but another name for attention, and is, therefore, always at command; proper appliances are still, I regret to say, by no means so common in the schools as they ought to be. Paper is seldom superabundant; and notwithstanding the advantages offered by the Board, generally shows a large proportion of the rubbish purchased in the shops; the ink is invariably scarce, and so curdled and gritty as to be almost unfit for use; the pens are, in a word, abominable—mere rusty bits of iron, which, scraping, sticking, and spattering, make writing a physical impossibility. In order not to disfigure my note-book with them and the ink, I have always been obliged to carry about with me some for my own use.

Arithmetic.—This subject receives its due share of time, and appears to be considered a leading one in most schools, yet it is, after all, not really well understood. Too much of the old hedge system is allowed to prevail in the mode of teaching it. Dry rules committed to memory, the sums as given in the book duly gone through by means of a mechanical formula, difficulties not cleared up or at all explained, but the pupils lifted over them, so to speak, by the master—these constitute the teaching and the learning of it. Hence it is, that though the pupils show a considerable degree of expertness in disposing of questions proposed in a certain routine way, they break down utterly whenever the questions are so involved as to require the knowledge and application of principles. The teachers, in a word, do not explain the processes as they go on, so as to make them familiar to and understood by the learners. If the black-board were used oftener, instead of allow-

ing

ing the children to sit in the seats poking blindfold through the book, more desirable results would be obtained.

"*Writing from Dictation.*—In many schools the proficiency arrived at in this subject is very creditable—in most it is fair. The time given to it, however, is not economized to the extent it might be. Teachers, for example, after the exercises have been written, very often content themselves with looking over each and marking the errors, sometimes without a word of comment. This, where the class is large, takes up a great deal of time, besides being in other respects objectionable. The plan of making the pupils exchange slates, and correct one another, as the teacher spells out the words aloud, is in every respect preferable—it saves time, excites the attention of the children in finding out the mistakes of their neighbours, and not only shows them where the spelling is incorrect, but how to correct it.

"*Grammar.*—Next to reading, grammar is the worse taught subject in the school course. There is scarcely a line of it that does not require explanation, and this is the very thing it does not get. The teachers, in many instances, as their examinations have over and over again shown, are not able to give it. Not am I surprised very much, for some of the rules, as stated in the books, are beyond the reach of human comprehension. An 'adjective,' for example, 'qualifies a noun,' but a noun is the 'name of any person, place, or thing;' therefore, an adjective qualifies or tells the quality of the name of, &c. One could imagine it expressing the quality of the *thing* which the noun stands for or represents. In the phrase 'I am he,' a child must be told 'am' is the verb, because, as the rule says, 'it implies action or the doing of something.' The definition of the 'adverb' is as bad as that of the adjective. The preposition shows the relation between words; *et cetera*. But, apart from the consideration of points like these, grammar, so far as its practical object is concerned, is not properly taught.

"*Geography.*—The extent to which a knowledge of geography is acquired is one of the main distinctive features of the National Schools. In the hedge schools it is unknown; in the middle-class private schools it exists but in name; in very few of the best schools in the country can it be said to be successfully taught. Perhaps too much time and attention are given to it by our teachers, especially as regards the junior classes of pupils. To make these read *intelligently* ought to be the first aim of a teacher—that step gained, they will be able to help themselves in acquiring a knowledge of other matters."

Mr. Macnamara, Killarney District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation:—

"The proficiency of the pupils in reading, estimating its elements collectively, may be justly described as being of useful satisfactory quality. The enunciation, however, is rendered unpleasant generally by monotonous tone, indistinctness, and some amount of mispronunciation. These defects might, in chief measure, be eradicated if the teachers informed themselves as to the manner in which the sounds of the voice are produced. Pupils should be required to use the lungs more freely, and a nicer, more exact employment of the organs of articulation should be taught. Much attention is paid to explanation; sometimes, according to the measure of the teacher's capacity, it is intelligent and interesting; sometimes it is far otherwise. The pupil's ability to explain is commensurate with that of the teacher, as a general rule. The proficiency in oral spelling is creditable in all the schools.

"*Pennmanship.*—The proficiency in penmanship is not, on the whole, as satisfactory as that attained in nearly all other school exercises. A great oversight in the manner of teaching this important art generally prevalent is, want of detailed instruction in the elements of good writing. Pupils should be taught from the black-board what it is which makes letters good letters, and *vice versa* with bad letters. The elements of symmetrical writing should be shown to consist in uniformity of height, breadth, slant, &c. The absence of these good elements should be shown in bad letters, made for the purpose on the black-board. Pupils may copy from copperplate copies for years without reflecting why the copy is good and theirs bad writing.

"*Arithmetic.*—The proficiency in this important subject is for the most part of a practical nature. With the more grown pupils it is a favourite study, arising from the special importance attached to it in the general estimation of parents. The scope of the general amount of proficiency attained is such as to fit the pupils for the ordinary mercantile and business operations of the country. But a small proportion of the pupils remain at school to a sufficiently late period to enable them to acquire sound theoretic acquaintance with the subject, and a fair knowledge of higher branches.

"*Writing from Dictation.*—Very fair skill is attained in writing from dictation. It is nearly in all the schools daily practiced by the senior classes.

"*Grammar.*—In many schools this subject is superficially taught; and though the senior classes in all the schools can parse easy sentences correctly, only in a few is there to be found well-directed study of the text-book, accompanied with ample explanation and examination. The subject, as a general rule, is much more thoroughly taught than in former years, however. The 'Spelling Book Superseded' receives a very considerable amount of attention, and with the good effect to be expected.

"*Geography*.—The proficiency in geography consists, for the most part, in acquaintance with the principal maps published by the Commissioners. By the senior classes in a large proportion of the schools text-books are studied, and as the subject is easy, the amount of acquaintance with these text-books is greater than with others which the pupils study."

Mr. Hickey, Bantry District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation:—

"I find that these important subjects receive throughout this district the attention they pre-eminently deserve; in the majority of the schools the proficiency is over an average, and what appears to me most satisfactory, as being what may not be so much expected in this remote and wild locality, the pronunciation of the pupils and teachers is remarkably free from provincialisms and false intonation."

"*Pennmanship*.—Though very considerable progress has taken place in the schools in this regard, a great deal is still to be done. I have been so much impressed with the necessity of promoting improvement and efficiency in this all-important branch of education, that I omit no opportunity of examining most particularly into the progress going forward, and I am happy to be able to state that much gratifying results may be expected in a short time throughout the districts. Very few, if any, of the teachers themselves write a poor or negligent hand."

"*Arithmetic*.—The proficiency in this branch is remarkably good, as, for example, in examinations for the place of paid monitor, I have no difficulty in finding several candidates, male or female, in many schools, to whom I do not consider it unreasonable to propose this question, or such like—'3 cwt. 2 qrs. 16 lbs. cost 13*s.* 17*d.*, the value of 19 cwt. 3 qrs. 14 lbs? The quantities to be reduced to mixed numbers, and the question to be worked by proportion, in fractions.' Much attention is beginning also to be paid to the theoretical principles of the art. As I consider that the value of arithmetic as an art practically useful and indispensable in the business of life, and as a most important means of developing the capacity and intellectual faculties of youth, cannot be overrated, I never, in any case, omit fully examining the entire business of this branch at my inspections. I find a natural aptitude in the minds and dispositions of the pupils for the study of this science: how far this feature of mind may be characteristic of the Irish peasantry I leave to the philosopher and student in such ethnological questions to consider, and I shall barely content myself with recording the fact, of which I am fully cognizant."

"*Writing from Dictation*.—Fair attention is being paid to this useful exercise in all the schools."

"*Grammar*.—All pupils beyond First Book are taught grammar, commencing with the simplest elements, and the progress generally is very satisfactory. The teachers are all excellent grammarians, and parsing is well taught to the higher classes in the majority of the schools of the district."

"*Geography*.—Much attention is also paid to this interesting and useful branch of education. Maps are well supplied to all the schools, and the proficiency of the pupils is, in general, very satisfactory."

Mr. Sheehy, Cork District, says, in reference to reading, including oral spelling and explanation:—

"I believe that the reading and writing of the pupils, taken individually, have improved during the past year in all the schools of my district; but I do not consider that the proficiency of the classes of any school in these subjects was much, if at all, higher at the close of 1860, than of 1859 or 1858, though in most of the schools there is ample room for improvement in both subjects. I ascribe this defect to the majority of the teachers being very indifferent readers and writers, and not to ignorance on their part of the method of teaching reading and writing; for the ladies in charge of Convent Schools have fewer opportunities of becoming acquainted with the methods of teaching the different school branches than the teachers of ordinary National Schools; and yet they produce much better readers and writers than those latter, simply because they read and write well themselves, adopt a high standard of reading and writing for each class, and take great pains to bring their pupils up to the standard. In like manner it will be found, in ordinary schools, that whenever a teacher excels in a particular branch, and that he has opportunities afforded him of teaching it, his pupils will be very proficient in the same branch. Indeed, success in teaching depends chiefly upon practice, and a thorough knowledge of the subject to be taught; since method and skill result from their combination. The suggestion, therefore, that I would make, not merely with reference to reading and writing, but also as regards the other school branches is, that every reasonable means should be adopted to improve the teachers in scholarship, with a view of increasing their efficiency. In a subsequent part of my Report I shall point out some steps that might be taken towards accomplishing this object."

"*Arithmetic*.—A comparison of the Proficiency Table for 1859 with that for 1860 shows a decrease in the latter of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the number able to write down millions correctly, a slight increase in the number able to do a sum in the simple and compound rules; but neither increase nor decrease in the number able to work an exercise in proportion or

or the rules above it. As to the progress in the theoretical or intellectual part of this branch of instruction I cannot say much, as, owing to the many matters I have to attend to when inspecting every school, I cannot interrogate the pupils on this or any other subject with much advantage to them or their teacher, or with satisfaction to myself. This science, which is well calculated to develop the reasoning faculties of the pupils, and to test the soundness of the teacher's instruction, I am obliged, for want of time, to pass over in a very superficial manner. I observed in many schools that when teaching the simple and compound rules, all—from the napsid monitor to the principal teacher—avoided any reference to a text-book; and the consequence has been, that in these schools the rules I have referred to have not been properly explained, the cases in each have not been regularly gone through, the examples to illustrate each case have not been suitable, and the exercises given to the pupils to work have not been graduated nor varied enough to make them practically acquainted with each rule and case. In the absence of carefully prepared notes, every teacher and monitor should use a text-book, that he might be supplied (as is often necessary) with proper definitions of the rules and terms, that he might see the order in which each case is taken up, and more especially that he might have ready at hand well-arranged exercises, which are very necessary to make the pupils expert calculators. Whilst pointing out the necessity on the part of each teacher and monitor of using a text-book when instructing on arithmetic, I trust it will not be considered irrelevant or out of place to refer to the injudicious manner in which the simple rules have been drawn up in the Board's large Treatise on Arithmetic, and its unsuitableness as a text-book, so far as these rules are concerned. In that work it will be seen that the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of decimals have been mixed up with those of whole numbers in the commencement of the book, thereby converting what have hitherto been called simple rules, and treated as such, into puzzling rules. In no other treatise on arithmetic that I am acquainted with has a similar course been adopted, and, I presume, for this reason, that the natural position for decimals is after fractions; as in explaining the former it is necessary to refer to the latter, and, moreover, as no principle implying a knowledge of decimals is employed for explaining any rule preceding that of fractions. I would therefore suggest, for the sake of the teachers and their pupils, that the earlier rules in the Board's treatise to which I have adverted should be simplified by excluding from them, both in the explanation and exercises, all reference to decimals.

Dictation.—In the past year there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of those proficient in writing from dictation; nevertheless the pupils of National Schools are much superior to those of other schools in this branch of instruction, and of this ample evidence has been afforded me by the written exercises of those whom, from time to time, I have examined as candidates for admission to the Munster Model Agricultural National School; for whilst the exercises of the National School pupils who presented themselves for examination contained only a few defects as regards incorrect spelling, omissions of words, and misplacing of capital letters, those of the pupils from other schools were, in most cases, full of mistakes. As regards penmanship, the pupils of National Schools, I am sorry to say, do not contrast so favourably with those attending other schools. In reading and writing private schools equal, and perhaps surpass, the National Schools; but in grammar, geography, arithmetic, and dictation the National Schools are much superior. It appears to me that the schools in my district would exhibit a higher proficiency in writing from dictation, than that which they have already attained, were the teachers to have spelling from dictation to precede it; for when pupils are put at once to write from dictation, they invariably omit a large proportion of the words, and misspell many more than they otherwise would, and for the simple reason that their minds, in the first instance, are directed to the writing of the words, and their attention is withdrawn from the spelling and order of them. In a similar way I find, when marking the monitors' and teachers' exercises, after the Annual Examinations, that the answers to the printed questions contain a greater proportion of easy words misspelled than do the dictation exercises, and simply because the attention of the teachers and monitors is directed, in the one case, to answering the questions, in the other to the spelling and arranging of the words dictated.

Grammar and Geography.—Unless in some of the organised and a few other schools, these branches are not taught in a satisfactory manner in my district, because the teachers' knowledge of grammar and geography is superficial and vague. As it is extremely difficult to get the teachers to write out notes of the lessons they are to teach, or to make them study with much advantage the subjects they have to give instruction in, I have come to the conclusion that, under these circumstances, it would be better for them to give up their present system of teaching (which is nothing more than putting a lot of disconnected questions to the pupils), and teach grammar and geography from text-books to the senior classes in precisely the same way that they do the lesson-books. By adopting this course the teachers would be obliged to keep to the text-books in their explanations and questions, and thereby adhere to a certain system as they proceed; their own information would be improved and become precise; their pupils' minds would be trained in making them understand and remember what they read; and the knowledge so acquired would be connected and permanent. Moreover, the getting off of tasks or home-lessons, which in most cases is merely nominal or mechanical, would be facilitated and encouraged, inasmuch as pupils learn in a comparatively short time what they understand, and, understanding it fully, they take an interest and a pleasure in studying it. Under the present

system of teaching geography, I scarcely ever find a pupil who has gone through even the small text-book on that subject; and, what is more strange still, I find in many schools large maps hanging around the walls that have never been used in the illustrating of lessons on geography."

F.—Feeling of Local Parties with regard to National Schools.

Mr. O'Callaghan, Limerick District.—"The people of the rural districts for whom the schools are intended, regard them as a settled institution, of which they would feel it a great misfortune to be deprived. A large portion of the Roman Catholic clergy and gentry are very favourably disposed towards them. Amongst the clergy and gentry of the Established Church moderate views are beginning to appear. I have grounds for stating that several of them will shortly apply for connexion."

Mr. Robinson, Newcastle District, reports that the feeling of parties in his district is "very favourable" to the National System of Education.

Mr. Lavelle, Clonmel District.—"The clergy of the Established Church, with a few exceptions, are opposed to National Schools, and the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church are opposed to Model Schools, though not to the National Schools generally."

Mr. Nissen, Tralee District.—"It affords me much pleasure in being able to state that the excitement and opposition which appeared to be rising against the system, at the very time I was writing my Annual Report last year, has, as far as I have been able to observe, almost if not entirely cooled down in this part of the country. Latterly I have not heard of any complaints regarding the working of the system."

Mr. Barrett, Macroom District.—"The large landed proprietors in this district appear to be totally indifferent as to National Schools, and indeed to education altogether, so far as the lower classes are concerned. The middle classes generally are favourably disposed towards the schools, and set a high value on the system of education pursued in them; and the lower classes prize them, and avail themselves of them with most unbounded confidence."

Mr. O'Loughlin, Mallow District.—"Among the laity generally the feeling appears to be favourable, and from my own experience I can say the same of the clergy also, notwithstanding the recent episcopal censures."

Mr. Macnamara, Killarney District.—"The feeling of all parties in this district may be described truly as being favourable to National Schools. In no instance is there any opposition at present to the establishment of a National School from opposition to the system. All classes seem to agree equally in estimating the very great advantages the general community derives from the action of National Education in this district."

Mr. Biley, Bantry District.—"The Roman Catholic population and clergy are universally in favour of the National Schools. No other parties, with the exception of Mr. Trench, Lord Lansdowne's agent, take any active interest in the National Schools."

Mr. Shooly, Cork District.—"The Roman Catholic clergy have no objection to place schools built or rented by themselves in connexion with the Board, nor to accept building grants on condition that the schools be vested in trustees—in fact, several of them are anxious to be aided in this way. But all, and their bishops as well, are opposed to vesting the schools in the Commissioners. Of the Established Church clergy, two in my district have schools under the Board, and two others during the past year made application, one for a building grant, and the other for salary, books, &c.; but the Board refused to aid the former, on the ground of the very small attendance expected; and the latter was obliged to withdraw his application, much against his own wishes, on account of the opposition given to him by his parishioners."

G.—State and Prospect of Education generally in District, as regards Schools and their Teachers.

Mr. O'Callaghan, Limerick District.—"In another part of this report I have stated my opinion respecting the proficiency of the pupils in the leading subjects of the school programme. These results are, of course, intimately connected with, and in fact may be said to mainly depend on, the social circumstances that surround the teacher. These circumstances are not yet of a character sufficiently satisfactory. It is, however, only rendering simple justice to the teachers to state that, as a body, they are doing their duty; and notwithstanding the absence in many parts of this district of due sympathy and co-operation to be expected from influential parties, but not given by them, that the teachers are making progress in the art of schoolmastership, and are successful in acquiring and maintaining a respectable social position. The increase made by the Commissioners in the scale of ordinary salaries, and the institution of the "good service salary," and of other premiums for faithful and successful services, have given great satisfaction to the teachers and managers, and will influence appreciably the efficiency of the schools. If the persons possessing

possessing ample means in each locality would accomplish for it alone the good which Mr. Vere Foster is effecting for a large portion of the country, the Irish National Schools would speedily attain a high standard of excellence.

"A reference to the tables in this report will show the unsatisfactory fact, that few of the teachers are living rent-free, in houses specially built for their accommodation; and that, in almost all instances, there is a total absence of the accessories of gardens, nest enclosures, or ornament. The little work on School Architecture circulated by the Board amongst the managers has received little or no attention; its teachings, at all events, have not borne the fruit of substantial performances. I have to notice the tendency during the past year to a steady increase in attendance of adults at evening schools: all to which I refer are conducted in National School-houses, of which three receive aid from the Board. In this way the disadvantage, so frequently referred to, arising from too early a withdrawal of children from the day-schools will, in some measure, be counteracted.

"As the social position of the teacher is becoming every year more attractive, the emoluments of his office more remunerative, the aids to teaching afforded by commodious school-rooms and suitable apparatus more complete, and the rewards of faithful and successful services larger and more secure, while the means of self-improvement are ample, and the opportunities for promotion fixed on just conditions, the time is, in my judgment, arrived when measures should be adopted for providing every school with a teacher competent to instruct in all the branches of the required course. It may be confidently affirmed that the teachers of the third class are unable to meet this requirement. Some period of probation, therefore, in this class should, in my opinion, be fixed, after which it would be imperative on them to show themselves deserving, by their proficiency in the course prescribed for second class, of being promoted to that class, or to be, if found insufficiently prepared, dismissed from the service of the Board. A three years' period of probation in the third class might be considered sufficiently indulgent.

"The plan proposed by an eminent authority for reducing the number of inspections in the year, and thus making each of them more searching, would in my opinion, if adopted, be productive of consequences of the highest value. Restricted to the inspection of one school for each day, the Inspector would be enabled to distribute his time suitably to the full requirements of each class; all necessity for rapid inquiries would cease; his examination would be made more instructive both to the pupils and the teacher; the results could be noted with complete accuracy, and his suggestions in the Observation Book would be founded on a better insight, and would be a surer reflex of the progressive development or the retrograde tendency, both of the pupils' acquirements and of the teacher's method of instruction. A perfect arrangement of the Time-table, and an improved organization, would be the natural results of this plan. The incidental visits would become more significant and important, because the tests supplied to the Inspector by the improved organisation and by the perfect applicability of the arrangements of the Time-table, and also from his own increased familiarity with the strong and weak points of each school, would be necessarily multiplied.

"It appears to me to be a matter of regret that the teachers totally neglect the means which their occasionally meeting together would offer for their mutual improvement. They are separated, it is true, at considerable distances, but it would be worth their while to assist one another intellectually, and form, as it were, a common stock of information on plans of teaching and general school arrangements, and also on the subjects of the course prescribed for themselves. The influence of the humble society, in rural districts, with which the teacher is associated is prejudicial to his own improvement; he incessantly sinks to the level of the intelligence around him. Should his superior tastes induce him to avoid this intercourse, he necessarily becomes almost isolated—a state of social existence very unfavourable in every point of view. There are two obvious ways in which, besides the due allowance of recreation and rest, a teacher ought to employ his out-of-school time: in making preparation for the next day's business—a very necessary and important duty, which, I fear, is generally neglected—and in sustaining or extending his own stores of information. But the power of sustained effort in the latter object, without a powerful stimulus to exertion, is given but to few men. It has been found necessary in all communities to form literary or professional societies for the encouragement and reward of intellectual cultivation, to be reached only by methodical application to study and well-trained exercise of thought. It may be said that the teachers possess the stimulus in the periodical public examinations; this is true to a considerable but not to the whole extent. Local aids are required as sources of personal activity; and these aids the teachers could supply by conversing together at stated times on the subjects indicated before. The use of free libraries, established in three or four leading towns in each district, would confer a great benefit on the teachers, and, with the help of mutual co-operation, would powerfully contribute towards the intellectual and social elevation of the entire body. It has occurred to me that satisfactory results might follow were the Inspectors directed to meet and confer with the teachers of their own district once a year. Each of the districts might be divided into three or four convenient groups, according to its extent; and they might devote one day in each year to meeting the teachers of each of these divisions. The time would be fully occupied in hearing short essays on school organization, or proposed new methods for teaching particular subjects of the school course; in listening to the observations of the more experienced on the views put forward in these essays; in bringing under the notice of the teachers passages contained in the Head Inspectors' Reports, and in general remarks affecting their schools. The Inspector should forward to the Education

Office the minutes of the day's proceedings, with the essays read, the names of the writers and the number of the teachers who attended. This plan might be perfected if each of the Head Inspectors also met similarly all the Inspectors of the district under his charge once a year. However this proposal may be regarded, it appears to me that some plan is required capable of affording to the teachers some aids to assist them in accomplishing the objects to which I have referred."

Mr. Robinson, Newcastle District.—"The efficiency of the National System depends, among other things, chiefly upon the following:—

- "1. Upon its being a system of education.
- "2. Upon the efficiency of the machinery by which it is worked.

"At present we have, properly speaking, no system of education. The schools are united by a common fundamental principle, by having the same rules of local management, of inspection, and central government, and by using the same books; but as regards the methods of teaching, they are, to a very great extent, permitted to be quite distinct. Each master is obliged to depend more or less upon himself, and is at liberty to teach in his own way, provided he attain to a certain proficiency laid down in a 'school programme.' The same results may have been attainable by easier and shorter methods, and during their attainment the intelligence of the children may have been more rationally and largely developed; yet these advantages are practically overlooked. There is no common stock formed by the accumulated experience of all to which each can apply for assistance in the time of necessity. There is no digest made of school experiences by competent persons, by which each might be guided in working out his individual duty. The methods of teaching are correctly at all known. Very few, if any, of our teachers could state exactly what have been the different methods practised from time to time of teaching the alphabet, or spelling, grammar, geography, arithmetic, writing, &c.; much less could they tell to which of the various methods have the opinions of practical educationists most favourably inclined; and yet this is the very knowledge teachers require, and the very knowledge it is the privilege as well as duty of old institutions to impart. No matter how many ways there are of teaching children to read, or spell, or write, &c. (and there are many which have been proposed, advocated, and rejected in their turn), there is always one which is the best. It is the duty of those in whose hands the control and formation of the system of education lie to determine not only what is best, but to prevent the introduction of what has been condemned. Tyroes in school management, or men not specially trained in the science of teaching, cannot possibly form a true opinion of the relative merits of the various methods submitted for their adoption. They may endeavour to test from time to time, in their own narrow spheres of action, the efficacy of methods which have been put to the test long previously and found wanting; or they may carry out what in their judgment appears correct, but which, had they known more, they would have been among the first to condemn. Either is an evil, and can only be removed by the establishment of a properly constituted guide, to which each can confidently look. In the absence of this guide the system is, as might naturally be expected, disjointed, and given over to a variety of guides, each differing from the other. Each Inspector, in his own district, is practically the person who moulds the system of education; but as these are, after all, individuals acting to the best of their ability, without consulting others, they form but imperfect guides. The system of each may be very good, but it is almost certain to be different from his neighbour's; and so long as it is different it is practically of little value, no matter how great its intrinsic merits may be. Even inferior methods, which are universal and constant, are productive of more good than superior ones which are continually differing and changing. As circumstances now are, the following is generally the result. An Inspector acting upon his own experience endeavours to introduce changes, which he considers improvements, into the management of the schools in his district. The teachers and managers, even when they perceive the benefits which the new order of things will produce, are slow in adopting the suggestions of the Inspector; for they naturally and correctly say, 'Your successor will have his system, which he will support by arguments quite as strong as yours; and he will, if he do not altogether condemn what you now advocate, strongly urge the adoption of his own views, and will favourably regard those teachers who follow them. The teacher will be continually changing his methods; and as errors in principle, when not very flagrant, are of less magnitude than the evils of occasional change, we do not like to alight what we are now practising.' If they do adopt the reforms, they will not enter zealously or warmly into them, and what might have produced good will be ineffectual for want of spirit and energy. Such are the evils of not having a system of education by which all might be directed. We have Inspectors who change and suggest but to do harm, or Inspectors who suggest none, lest others may undo what they have done; and teachers who look upon reforms with suspicion, and who, in consequence, either refuse them altogether, or adopt them so apathetically as to produce evil instead of good.

"Uniformity of action may be carried too far; it may destroy completely the individuality of the agents which produce it: but the true uniformity, not the result of destruction of individual invention, but the invention of each, tempered, tried, and judged of, for the good of all. Each should not only be allowed to think and invent in accordance with the intellect God has gifted him with, but should be encouraged to do so; but he should

not

not be allowed to put his invention into force until brought to the test, until valued by men of more matured experience than himself.

"There is a natural tendency in the schools to assume a uniformity. Being the same in many points, they naturally tend to being the same in all; and although no special means have been taken to secure this sameness, they have gradually approached it. One teacher appears to have copied another, and that to so great an extent that the schools differ very little from each other. There is one way of teaching most things in the majority of schools, but as it is the result of the uneducated, uncorrected efforts of a few, it is necessarily inferior. Bad as it comparatively is, it proves that uniformity, to the extent that such is desirable, is practicable in the schools; and what I advocate is that this imperfect system, partially uniform, should be changed for a perfect one, as completely so as possible.

"If we do not educate a child properly, the child educates itself badly. What is true of an individual, is true of a number of them acting as one; if they are not properly directed, they will invent and practise bad methods of their own. At present there is a strong outcry for better teachers; but what we have are capable of considerable improvement.

"To remedy the defects just stated, I think the Commissioners should publish a manual containing the duty of the teacher in the various positions in which he may be placed, and consider instructions as to how he can discharge it most satisfactorily. This manual has been strongly recommended by Mr. Keenan, Chief of Inspection, who has, in addition, sketched in detail what it should contain. Mr. McCreedy, also Chief of Inspection, recommended its adoption in Vol. VI. of the Reports of the Commissioners; Dr. Newell writes in favour of it in the Twenty-second Report, Vol. II.; while mention is made of the urgent necessity of such a work by no less than ten Inspectors, in their Reports for 1859. The professors also have approved of it. Mr. Butler, when Head Inspector, writes of it in Vol. IV. and also in Vol. VI. of the Reports of the Commissioners; while Dr. Sullivan, in his 'Outline of the Method of Teaching,' says that that work is 'preparatory to a complete manual of instruction for the use of teachers in connexion with the Board.' In fact, the want of it has been so much felt, and the necessity for it so strongly pointed out by the superior officers of the Board, that my words can have but little additional weight. I use them, however, chiefly because I conceive it my duty to state fully what I believe will benefit the system with which I am connected. I leave the question of whether I am right or not entirely in the hands of those whose privilege it is to determine.

"It remains for me now to speak of those in whose hands the practical working of the system lies. They are chiefly the teachers and Inspectors. The efficacy of the system depends principally on the efficiency of these officers, so much so, that no greater impediment could be raised to the spread of education than bad teachers or bad Inspectors. It is not my province to speak of the general fitness of that body to which I belong; I wish merely to mention a few of the restrictions now in force, which prevent their being as useful as they might. The chief of these arises from the mass of writing which they have to do. This is so great, in school and out of school, that few professed clerks write so much. The Inspector acts a double part. He not only examines into the progress of education, but he performs the duty of a clerk and storekeeper, and the time absorbed in the one capacity is quite the same as the other. His special functions appear to be too much overlooked. During the time he spends in each school, very little should interfere with his examination of the children themselves. The more time he devotes exclusively to them, the better he discharges, in my estimation, the true functions of his office. But each inspection consists at present not only of such duties, but of examination into the accuracy of the school accounts, supply of books, furniture, apparatus, repairs of house, its measurement, cleanliness, &c., the adherence to the rules of the Board, the nature of the Time-table, and the teacher's attention to its details, and, occasionally, statistics regarding the age, class, appointment, &c. of the persons in charge. This duty is, to a great extent, necessary, but, in my estimation, not to the extent it is required, nor so frequently. I think that there should be but two regular inspections in the year, but that these should be searching, and almost entirely educational; and that instead of the third inspection, which we now have, there should be an *incidental visit* only. That at this incidental visit the duty of the Inspector would be to obtain the information which forms what may be called the *secundary* part of the present report—such as those things mentioned above—and that forms of report should be drawn up in accordance with the special nature of these visits. The reports, in fact, should be "*educational*," and "*non-literary*;" and both should be so arranged that the Inspector, in obtaining matter for them, should not be forced to direct his mind away from their primary purpose. This, in fact, is but division of labour, and were it carried out, both parts of the Inspector's duty would be better done.

"Again, the duties of tax depôt, and of attending to the extensive correspondence connected with the schools, occupy so much of each Saturday, that he is obliged to write his reports to the office hurriedly. Next to bad inspection is a bad report. A good report, full, carefully weighed, and carefully written, is essential for the due estimate, by the central authorities, of each school's status; but such a report is rendered very nearly impossible by the quantity of extra duty imposed upon the Inspectors. To remedy this I would suggest, as has already been suggested, that a small sum should be allowed annually, by which the Inspector could obtain the services of a competent person to take part of the labour which now presses upon him, and interfere with the discharge of his higher functions."

"As the efficiency of the Inspector depends also upon the character of his suggestions and upon the attention paid to them, I would recommend—(1). That the Inspector be required to give all his suggestions in full for the approval of the Board; (2). That those which are approved of be strictly and properly enforced. All suggestions left may not be good, but such as are pronounced to be good should be carried out zealously and at once. I know of no point in which teachers fail more than in their attention to the suggestions left for their guidance. I have endeavoured already to assign one reason for this, but another reason is to be had in the impatience with which they have perused it from time to time. Thus I have known cases in which I have pointed out defects in the school accounts, one inspection after another, until the teacher had, in the end, to be fixed before removing them. From the distrust thus created in my mind, I was obliged to examine the books so minutely at each visit, as to absorb a great portion of the time I should have given to the instructions of the children. Had the teachers known that any neglect of approved suggestion would be immediately punished severely, they never would have been guilty of it. They would at once have done what they were desired to do, and would thus not only have discharged their own duty more efficiently, but they would not have absorbed the time of the Inspector. I think the Commissioners deal too leniently in these cases, even for the teachers' own good. A teacher who puts off the duty from time to time is generally disgraced in the end, whereas if the punishment for neglect had been known to be severe and certain, no neglect would have taken place.

"I had determined to say something of time-tables, premiums, grade of teachers, libraries, managers, &c. but as I am certain I have already trespassed too far, I must defer the matter until a more suitable opportunity presents itself.

"With regard to the suggestions scattered through the Report, I beg to state that I have given them simply as the results of my reflection upon the working of the system for the past year; and I trust that the Commissioners will be kind enough to believe that I have been wholly unbiassed by any desire to step beyond my own position."

Mr. Lester, Clonmel District.—"Owing to the opposition of the Roman Catholic clergy to the Clonmel Model School, only about one-third of the boys at present in attendance there are Roman Catholics.

"The teachers in this district, especially those among them who are not nearly worn out in the service, are making earnest and successful efforts to improve themselves and their schools, and show no disposition to change for any other their present occupation, which is every year becoming lucrative, and therefore more desirable—affording them now, in general, a decent livelihood.

"In all the schools the General Lesson is read, and the principles of it inculcated on the minds of the pupils; and in most of them great care is bestowed on moral and religious training, both by the teachers and managers.

"There are no school committees in the district. The management is entirely under individuals, the majority of whom are Roman Catholic clergymen, and three of whom are clergymen of the Established Church. The lay managers, of whom there are eight, are persons of high social position; one is a lady of large property, one a nobleman, one an M.P.; the rest are land-agents and private gentlemen. The clerical managers frequently visit the schools for the purpose of giving religious instruction at the times set apart for that purpose, and sometimes they examine the classes on the subjects set down for them in the school programme.

"I know of no impediments to the extension of National Education in the district except the opposition of the Roman Catholic clergymen to the Clonmel District Model School."

Mr. Nias, Tralee District.—"I. There has been of late years a gradual and satisfactory improvement among the teachers generally as school-keepers and instructors of youth; and, in consequence of the increase that has from time to time been made to their salaries, they are becoming more contented with the profession, and but few, comparatively speaking, show a desire to exchange it for another. The salaries, however, owing to the high price of provisions, are still inadequate to support them with that degree of comfort and independence to which, in order to make them really useful servants of the public, they are entitled. Very many of them have families to maintain, and this they do find a difficult task upon their slender incomes, for, except in a very few cases, from the nature of their situation, they are unable to embark in any other kind of business; and even if they could do so, such would only serve to detract from their respectability and usefulness as a class of men looked upon as set apart for and capable of instructing and fitting the rising generation for the varied ordinary pursuits of life. The schoolmaster should be liberally provided for, and he should also be required to give his whole time and attention to the business of teaching, and not to any other.

"In the country the teacher's dwelling is usually a cabin, with a garden or small piece of land attached. Their position in society ranks much higher than that of persons in other employments whose incomes are even greater.

"II. I have observed during the past year a very perceptible change for the better in the moral tone and aspect of the schools in this district.

"A greater amount of attention is being given to the inculcation upon the minds of the pupils of the principles contained in the General Lesson, and both teachers and pupils seem
improved

imbued with a spirit of natural good-feeling and clarity to one another, as well as to those with whom they associate in their respective circles. What is also most pleasing, I find the teachers particularly careful to impress upon their pupils the duties of respect to superiors, and to all those placed in lawful authority; to teach them to respect and obey their parents; to foster and encourage in the innocent mind of youth, by precept as well as by example, all that is good and excellent in our nature, and to discountenance everything that has the remotest tendency to evil. This is all that can be looked for in any National School; and while teachers and pupils thus go hand in hand in promoting the general cause of education, we may look forward with confidence for an assurance of the happy influences which such early training of the young will hereafter produce upon society at large.

"III. The schools in this district are nearly all under the management of individuals. The Prison School, in Tralee, is under the management of the Local Board of Superintendence, and the Inspector of the gaol. The Local Inspector, who is a clergyman of the Established Church, visits both the school and the prison several times each week.

"Three of the number are Workhouse Schools, and are managed by the Board of Guardians of the Union. It is principally the financial matters connected with these schools that are discussed and settled at the meetings of the respective Boards; they scarcely ever meet for the purpose of holding an examination of the pupils. The guardians individually, however, occasionally visit the schools to witness the method of teaching practised, but do not themselves examine the pupils. These schools are subject to the inspection of the Poor Law Inspector, who examines the pupils and inspects the accounts.

"Two belong to clergymen of the Established Church; but only one of them is in operation, which is very frequently visited by the patron, often three times in each week.

"One is situated on the property of a lady resident in England, but which is managed by her agent, who lives in Dublin. This school is, of course visited but seldom.

"All the remaining schools are under the management of the Roman Catholic clergy. This class of patrons is by far the most extensive, and the schools are now beginning to be visited by them much oftener than formerly. In consequence of the many demands that are made upon their time, they are not able to visit the schools as often as would be wished. They, nevertheless, when an opportunity offers, do examine the classes, and make a record of the result of their examination in the Daily Report Book. These gentlemen also exercise the most scrupulous watchfulness over the general conduct of both the teachers and pupils.

"IV. Having treated of this part of the subject, impediments or hindrances, at considerable length in my reports for 1858 and 1859, but more particularly in that for 1859, I deem it unnecessary for me to make any further remarks on the present occasion, save that what appears to me to be the safest and best course to be adopted for the extension and improvement of National education, is a steady impartial adherence to the rules as already laid down by the Board for its administration."

Mr. Barrett, Macroom District.—"The state of education in the district is, on the whole, satisfactory; a large number of the schools are working with fair efficiency, and are conferring important benefits on the children in the localities in which they are placed. But the number of schools, or the extent of the course of instruction is not adequate to the wants of the people. A strong desire exists to have Greek and Latin taught in addition to the course taught in the National Schools, and in three places in this district this desire has been realised. Classical schools, which are virtually supplemental to the National Schools, and which are under the management of managers of the National Schools, have been established, and the same pupils attend both these schools and the National Schools on the same days. The prospects of education are favourable; for, notwithstanding the existence of some impediments, a more general diffusion of elementary education and an extension of the present course of instruction seem to be inevitable. An expectation is very generally entertained that the Commissioners will give grants towards the erection of school-houses, which are to be vested in trustees; and the managers generally seem anxious to avail themselves of grants on those terms. It is probable, therefore, that under this arrangement there will be a large increase in the number of schools; and that the state of education in the district will thereby be considerably improved.

"The teachers are improving as school-keepers and instructors of youth. The training department of the Central Model School, Dublin, the establishment of District Model Schools, and the institution of paid monitors, have promoted a knowledge of the art of teaching which is highly serviceable in the cause of popular education; and the grants towards improving school-buildings, and furnishing and fitting up school-rooms, made by Mr. Foster, have aided very considerably in enabling some of the teachers in this district to work their schools with increased efficiency. Organization also is effecting important improvement in some of the schools, and if duly attended to by the teachers, will confer on them important benefit, as the experience these teachers acquire while their schools are under organisation cannot fail to render them more efficient than they were

before their schools were organised. The schools which I would recommend for organisation are, however, those which are under lowly classed and untrained teachers, as both such schools and such teachers are most in need of improvement; and my experience in this district leads me to believe that the organisation of *first-class schools*, under *first-class teachers*, is not followed by any great change in the state of the school.

"The teachers appear to be fully devoted to their business, and to have adopted teaching as the chosen profession of their lives; few have any other occupation than that of teaching, and from the fact that few or none leave the service of the Board unless compelled to do so, and that those who are compelled to leave it appear extremely anxious to return, it is evident that they are not desirous to give up the profession of teaching.

"The social standing of the teachers in this district is very satisfactory, being much above that of other persons of equal incomes in their localities. Their means of living are, in almost all cases, derived from their schools; and their modes of living, so far as they are observable in public, are very creditable. Their dwellings are comfortable, and are, in most cases, equal to those of second-rate farmers in this district. Their conduct is most creditable, and, as a body, they are very much respected by all classes of people in the neighbourhood in which they reside.

"A Christian spirit is inculcated with the specific religious instruction which is given in all the schools without exception, and by the general lesson, the principles of which are inculcated in all the schools every day. Neatness of dress and propriety of deportment are not so carefully attended to in male schools, or in the mixed schools, as they should be. The appointment of workmistresses in mixed schools has, however, had a very beneficial influence in these particulars during the past year; in most of the female schools they receive fair attention, and in the convent school the regard paid to these points is highly creditable.

"The local management is, in all cases, exercised by individuals; and in the cases of ordinary town and rural schools the managers are Roman Catholic clergymen. There is, however, one school under the management of a medical doctor, who is a member of the Established Church. The amount of management consists in the appointment and removal of teachers, strict supervision over their conduct, performance of the necessary official correspondence, and occasional visits to the schools.

"The chief impediments to the extension and improvement of National Education in this district are, the want of adequate school accommodation and the irregularity of the pupils' attendance at the schools. The former seems likely to decrease under the new arrangements expected from the Board, and finally to disappear; but the latter impediment most, I believe, be borne with, as it results from causes it seems impossible to remove."

Mr. O'Loughlin, Mallow District.—"There is a strong desire among the general body of teachers to do their duty efficiently. Though a consciousness of the important obligation imposed on them with reference to the hopes and prospects of so many of the youth of the country has much to do with this, the conviction that it is the only path open to them for improving their own condition has not a little weight also. This, however, is only as it should be. Labour is, no doubt, a duty, but, when unrewarded, it is a very disagreeable one. Accompanied by advancement, half its weariness is unfelt, though its powers be strained to the utmost. The peculiarities of the teacher's position make this especially true in his case, for his very existence seems made up of contradictions. His education is that of a gentleman; his means those of a second-rate servant; his mind trained to grasp the difficulties of some of even the more abstruse sciences, yet stooping daily and hourly to the teaching of the rudest elements of a child's education; his usefulness second to that of no other member of the community, but its value ignored by those capable of judging, and despised by those who are not. His personal appearance and habits moderately decent; the house, if he can get one, where he spends his evenings, nights, and mornings, and where he is supposed to study or recruit his energy for work immediately, mean and shabby; a scholar without books—an unhappy realization of ambitious beggary—an everything, in fact, without its corresponding advantages. His means, it is true, have been improved of late, but as the general increase of salary has been more than eaten up by the dearness of the primary necessities of life, and as the 'good service salary' has reached comparatively few, no perceptible amelioration of the condition of the mass of teachers has followed. In this the managers are much to blame, for if they would only give up their anxiety to be generous at the expense of the teacher, in stepping between him and parents who are well able to pay for the expense of their children, all parties would gain by it. For what are a few shillings a-year to a farmer? but these few shillings multiplied by the number of parents who insist on having their children taught free, are a very material thing to a teacher. And yet not even he would much mind the loss, if such children would only attend regularly; but instead of that he has the mortification of seeing his time and labour given up for nothing, and his classes constantly inundated and upset by a horde of idlers, who, after months of absence, come in and expect to be put side by side with those who have been attending regularly. If he refuses to gratify them they worry the manager with complaints, until he comes to think unfavourably of him, or perhaps for the sake of peace removes him entirely. If, on the other hand, he places them in classes for which they are not fit, he gets unfavourable reports from the Inspector, and so sees his hopes

hopes of promotion gradually slipping away from under him, and himself condemned to a life of drudgery and thankless toil. But suppose, with herculean energy, he overcomes these difficulties, how is he to study? Without any one to guide him; without books, save the few supplied by the Board; without quiet, either in his own badly-ventilated and badly-lighted cabin, where children, wife, and himself crowd together, in one or at most two small apartments, or if unmarried, at the farmer's fireside, where, after his day's labour, he continues teaching in payment of his humble fare. What, I repeat, can he do towards improving himself? Absolutely nothing, or worse than nothing, for his brain must be wholly distracted by the effort to do something. No wonder, then, that in many instances the teachers appear to constitute an eccentric scatterbrained race. I am only astonished they stand it so well. Something, however, ought to be done for them—encouragement to managers to build houses for them, establishment of district libraries, and such a curtailment of the Inspectors' clerical duties as would leave them a portion of Saturday at the service of such teachers as might wish to study the Board's course systematically and under some sort of guidance. For my own part, I consider it a charity and a duty to give them aid in whatever shape I can. My books, my experience, my advice, are at their service. If at times, then, I have to find fault with their schools, they know it is from no love of fault-finding, but because it is my duty. And here I may remark, that the system of inspection which implies that a school has been only properly examined when a fault has been made out and noted for head-quarters, exercises a most discouraging influence. No school can be perfect in every point; but to overlook general excellence, and draw down an admonition for some petty defect for which the Inspector's word would have been enough, is not only harsh and unjust towards the teacher, but impolitic as regards its general bearing on the interests of education—I do not say that such a system exists—I merely allude to what I consider possible, in order to state what is my own practice.

"Moral tone of Schools.—Whatever may be said of mixed education in the abstract, it is certain that the children attending the National Schools are as correct in morals and as decent in behaviour as those of any other schools in the country. It is not because the contrary has never been proved that I say this, but because I know it from those who have an opportunity of judging, and to some extent from my own observation. It is, however, only what might, *a priori*, be expected; for though the clergy exercise little or no supervision over the schools, they take care when appointing teachers to inquire first and particularly as to previous good character, and having satisfied themselves of that, to establish their opinion by what they can see and learn afterwards for themselves.

"Management.—To all who know anything of the working and economy of the schools, it must be patent that no such thing as management, properly so called, exists. The appointment of teachers done with safeguards enough, the tardy dismissal of inferior ones, the signing of the necessary official documents, and a look once or twice a-year into the school, constitute all that is now termed such. Active, vigilant, constant supervision, there is none."

Mr. McManus, Killarney District.—"The teachers, throughout the year, conducted themselves as a body in a manner to earn the respectful consideration of the entire community.

"Discharging their onerous duties, on the whole, with earnestness and patient fidelity, the younger and less experienced, it may fairly be estimated as a general result, have improved in the ways of teaching, and in the exactness necessary for good school keeping. Inasmuch as that the schools, as they became vacant in these several years past, were permitted to be supplied with young teachers of promise, from their worth of character and intellectual adaptability, a very marked improvement in the professional spirit and capacity of the total body of teachers of the district has taken place. Seed of a good sort, properly planted and suitably nurtured, may fairly be expected when it shoots out to gain strength with advancing years; and so the greater number of the young teachers in this district, should they realise their promise, will doubtless ripen into efficient schoolmasters, and I trust attain the highest honours and rewards of their profession.

"The external marks of decency which increase of salaries enables the teachers to display without unbecoming ostentation, their own efficient discharge of duty, and good conduct, necessarily tend to elevate their social standing as a body. The action of national education in improving the tastes and domestic habits of the town and rural populations, the prosperity of the agricultural class, and other civilising causes, have lately elevated the tone of society generally.

"The sentiments arising from such social improvements tend to raise the social standing of the national teacher, by the greater degree of respectful consideration they evoke for his office.

"Among the teachers I have not noticed a spirit of discontent or anxiety to abandon their profession. Of course I am aware of the vexatious difficulties they have to contend with in many cases. Difficulties in procuring lodging accommodation, difficulty in supplying requisites to their schools, unjust and dispiriting difficulty in collecting their school fees, difficulty in supplying themselves with domestic conveniences, &c. Naturally, many complain at these impediments to their happiness, and have just grounds for complaints, for in many cases these difficulties might with great good effect be removed.

"In my estimation the moral animus of the schools is much the greatest of their results.

I have no hesitation in saying that the secular instruction and religious instruction given in the schools have the happiest effect on the general conduct of the pupils; and that I am fully convinced the Christian spirit learnt in them must exercise a powerful influence in securing the happiness of the pupils in every relation of existence.

"The management of the schools continues in the hands, with a few exceptions, of Roman Catholic clergymen, holding the rank of parish priest for most part.

"The duties of management continue to be discharged as heretofore. The duty of appointing an efficient teacher when a school becomes vacant, is the paramount duty of a manager, so far as secular instruction is concerned; and this duty is, in almost every instance, it may be said, discharged with proper deliberation. Other minor duties of management cannot receive so much of the attention of the managers as might be desirable, in consequence of the multifarious parochial obligations which occupy so much of their time and thoughts.

"On the whole, I estimate that national education in this district is, considering all the circumstances of the country, in a fairly flourishing state, and that it is scattering the elements of happiness and improvement, which not only the present but future generations will enjoy."

Mr. Hickey, Bantry District.—"I do not deem it necessary to make any lengthened observations here, as I would be obliged, in a great measure, to repeat the remarks made by me on former occasions; however, I am unwilling to omit this opportunity of expressing my humble testimony of the noble generosity, kind attention, and judicious efforts of Vere Foster, Esq., in improving the state of the schools of this district, as well as of the others throughout the country, and thereby giving an important impulse to the cause of education. The large sums of money granted by this gentleman for the purpose of boarding nearly all the non-vested schools, and in furnishing them with most judiciously selected apparatus, as well as furnishing apparatus to other schools of the vested class, entitle him to the lasting gratitude of all friends of the poor, and to be ranked amongst the 'benevolent' and beneficent of the human race."

Mr. Steady, Cork District.—"I. The teachers of my district, except in a few instances, are not improving as instructors of youth, and this arises not so much from want of method in the art of teaching, as from neglecting to study what they have to teach, and what they have to prepare for examination in. I have been greatly surprised to learn from inquiries I have made, that they study very little in the mornings and evenings, though very few of them, as may be seen from the tabulated sheets, have any other business to occupy their leisure hours. In this respect they do not practise themselves what they are expected to insist on respecting their pupils. I suppose, if the times the teachers spend at study were put together, and an average taken, it would not amount to an hour a day during the year for each teacher. In fact, some of the more experienced of them admitted as much; and whatever knowledge they do acquire by this cursory kind of study is very superficial, and proves of little advantage to them when teaching others, or when under examination themselves. With the view of remedying this great defect, I would suggest; 1st. That every encouragement should be given to the teachers to attend the annual examination, as all—even the most inert amongst them, when certain of being examined, make some preparation for it by studying some months previously; and the gain in point of scholarship, though it may not always be sufficient to merit promotion, is certainly calculated to have them better qualified for a future examination, and to increase their usefulness in their schools. 2d. That those teachers whose written examinations would not warrant their recall to the oral examination, should get back their exercises after they had been carefully noted and marked by the District Inspector, and revised by the Head Inspector. In this way the most backward would become aware of their deficiencies, which is the first step towards their improvement, the second and third being that of learning from their books, or more highly-classed teachers, or perhaps from the Inspector, the answers to the questions they missed, and that of studying with greater care and attention the subjects in which they exhibited a want of proficiency. The practice that prevails in large schools respecting the exercises of the senior classes, and the advantages I have known to follow, where I adopted a similar plan in reference to several monitors who attended the annual examination a year before they were required, strongly recommend the adoption of this suggestion. 3d. That the Inspector should, at each visit, inquire about the teacher's studies, question him on those (if any) coming within the programme, and make a record of his answering in the observation book. All this might be done in a quarter of an hour, and while the children are at play, or in a remote part of the school-room. I have no doubt that the adoption of these suggestions, or ones like them, would make the teachers study, and thereby greatly increase their efficiency as instructors of youth. I believe too, that the step taken by the Commissioners, in throwing open to competition amongst the teachers some of the vacancies on the inspection staff, will be productive of the very best results; as it will, doubtless, stimulate the first class and Model School teachers to improve their studies, will gradually raise the standard of scholarship amongst the teachers, and will be the means of supplying the Board with officers whose previous training specially qualifies them for the examination of pupils, monitors, and teachers, which, after all, constitutes *four-fifths* of the Inspector's duties. As copies of the report containing the decision of the Board on the point have not been distributed amongst the managers and teachers, and as many of the latter may remain a

long

long time in ignorance of it, I think it would be advisable for the Board to send circulars to all the male teachers, through their managers, conveying the decision, and giving in detail the special qualification necessary to secure a nomination for the competitive examination, and also the programme of subjects which the examination would embrace. In order to be able to select the most suitable candidates through the country, and to make the examination tell most effectively on the teachers generally, it would be necessary to have a circular sent to the District Inspectors, desiring them to bring under the notice of their respective Head Inspectors, from time to time, such teachers in their districts as they considered had all the qualifications prescribed by the Commissioners, and that another should be sent to the Head Inspectors, requesting them to forward to the office for insertion in the 'Nomination List' the names of the more eligible of candidates whom the District Inspector had pointed out; and to have the candidates so selected prepared for their examinations, the Inspectors ought to be informed after one examination had taken place, the names of those that were eligible for the next, in order that they might apprise them of it.

"As school-inspectors, I am able to report that nearly all the teachers of the district have improved during the past year—those of the organized schools in so remarkable a manner that the casual visitor is at no loss in distinguishing their schools from those that have not been organized. Indeed it is due to Mr. Reantree to state, that during the year and a-half he has been organising schools in this district, he has been most zealous and painstaking in the discharge of his duties; and whilst exhibiting great kindness and civility to the teachers, he has secured for himself their esteem and respect. With the managers he has been very popular, and has got them to carry out all his hints respecting improvements in their schools.

"II.—So far as I have the means of judging, I believe the moral tone of the schools is satisfactory. In no instance have I heard of any complaints made against the pupils of National schools during the past year, and at all my examinations they have conducted themselves very well. In habits of order, cleanliness, and punctuality of attendance, they are improving, and slightly, too, in their manners. I am happy to be able to say that I have not heard, either privately or officially, of any complaint against a teacher during the year just past, except one case, where it came under the notice of the Board, who punished the teacher for it; but on the contrary, I have heard many of them spoken highly of by their managers and the parents of their pupils. Indeed, in some few cases, where the teacher paid great attention to the religious instruction of the children, I heard the managers express the obligations they were under for the great help afforded by the teachers.

"III.—Of the 105 schools in my district, 91 are under the management of 24 Roman Catholic clergymen, who, generally speaking, visit them more frequently than they used to do, owing to the desire expressed by the Roman Catholic bishops to that effect. Those of them whom I mentioned on a former occasion as being very attentive and active continue so still; four are under the management of two clergymen of the Established Church, one of whom takes the liveliest interest in his schools; two are under the management of the superior of the Presentation Brothers, who superintends both and takes special charge of the senior classes in one of them; two are under the management of two gentlemen, in the employment of Government, who take very little interest in the schools; three are workhouse schools; two are gael schools; and one is a model agricultural school.

"I cannot better conclude this report than by referring to the liberal and munificent aid afforded by Vere Foster, Esq., to a large number of schools in my district. Unconnected with the county Cork by any other ties than those that bind the philanthropist to his fellow man, he has, during the past two years, made himself acquainted with the state of nearly all the schools in my district, as to furniture, apparatus, &c.; and to about 30 of those that needed assistance most, he has generously given grants, varying from 4*l.* to 34*l.*, in judiciously selected apparatus, or in apparatus and pecuniary aid towards boarding the floors of the schools.

"Both managers and teachers are deeply grateful to him; and I am sure the latter will manifest their feelings of gratitude in a way which will be most gratifying to Mr. Foster, by making the best use of the aids in teaching he has supplied in improving the education of their pupils."

— II. —

(5988—63.)

COPY of a LETTER from Mrs. Norris, Superior of the Convent, Baggot Street, Dublin, to the Commissioners of National Education.

Gentlemen,

Baggot Street Convent, 21 December 1863.

THE Reports of your Inspectors undoubtedly acquaint you with the fact, that, for several years past, there has been in operation, in connexion with the Baggot Street Schools of the Sisters of Mercy, whose superior I am, a training department, in which, at present, are instructed and trained for the office of schoolmistress, and are boarded and lodged, 40 young girls; while an equal number of others, who do not reside in the house connected with the schools, are trained in the same way.

That this Institution is well suited as a training establishment for female teachers, is evident, for the following reasons:—

1st. The buildings, furniture, fittings, school apparatus, and sanitary circumstances of the establishment are unexceptionable.

2d. The large number of model and practicing schools of every degree in operation, in which girls of every age, from infancy to adolescence, infants of each sex, and junior boys are taught.

3d. The daily average attendance in all these schools, for the past year, has been 851 pupils; on some days the number in attendance exceeded 1,000, whilst the daily average number on roll during the year was 1,285 children.

4th. The efficiency of the staff and the success of their labours are fully admitted by your Inspectors.

Eighty per cent. of the pupils, and about the same proportion of the teachers of the National schools being Catholics, and one-fifth of all the girls in the National schools alone being taught in schools under nuns, it follows that a Catholic training for teachers, such as is provided in Baggot Street, is necessary to satisfy the wants and the religious feelings of the general population of Ireland.

To what we have said about literary education, it is to be added that our institution in Baggot Street affords special facilities for instruction in every branch of female industry, manual and domestic, a large House of Mercy for servants of good character attached to the convent, being an excellent Industrial Model School, to the inspection of which the young teachers may have access.

For the support of the 40 young girls that we have in training for the office of schoolmistress we derive no assistance from the National Board.

The burden thus placed upon us forms a strong contrast with the advantages which Catholics enjoy in England.

Under the British plan there are 39 training colleges, some for mistresses, in which about 3,000 students are instructed for periods of from one to three years each, and towards the support of which the Council on Education granted about one-eighth, viz., 103,105*l.*, out of 804,002*l.*, their whole Parliamentary Estimate for last year.

These training colleges in England are under the exclusive direction of the several religious bodies who founded them, the State having, in many cases, aided their erection, besides contributing largely to their annual support.

The Catholics of England participate in these advantages in the Hammersmith (London) Training College for masters, and in the Liverpool Training College, conducted by nuns, for mistresses.

The pupil teachers in the Catholic schools in connexion with the Government who have completed their apprenticeship and certain other qualified candidates obtain, by competitive examination, exhibitions, called Queen's Scholarships, which they hold for two years, and these enable them to meet the demands for residence and tuition in the training college. An annual grant (varying from 13*l.* to 24*l.* for young men, and two-thirds of those rates for young women) is also made directly to the college for each student that passes the Inspector's examination in the prescribed course of study; and both these aids contribute largely to support the training colleges.

I beg leave to submit to the Commissioners of National Education this statement, that they may consider the claims of the Training Institution in Baggot Street to be allowed the same advantages as similar institutions in England, and to grant it subsidies proportioned to its merits, so often tested by examination of the teachers, under the official programme, by the Board's own Inspectors.

The principle of separate denominational halls or houses as residences for teachers in training has been fully admitted by the Right Honourable Mr. Cardwell in the House of Commons, and we do not see why the promises held out by that statement should not be realized. A subsidy in our case would be a proof to the country that Government is disposed to grant to Ireland the same advantages which England has long enjoyed, and that at length we may hope to see the reign of justice and fair play established.

Our community would be content with a capitation allowance for each teacher successfully trained, calculated on the average expense to the Commissioners for the travelling, board,

board, establishment, charges, and other items connected with the support and tuition of each young woman sent out from Marlborough Street after the ordinary Session.

Trusting that the Commissioners may practically recognise the just claims of the Catholics of Dublin and of Ireland to be admitted to advantages enjoyed by their fellow Catholics in England, the right to train the teachers for their own schools, and to be aided therein by the State,

I have, &c.
(signed) *Margaret Norris,*
Superiress.

To the Secretaries for the Commissioners,
Education Office, Marlborough Street.

(9889—63. B. O. 31/12/63.)

COPY of a LETTER from the Commissioners of National Education, in reply to the
Application of Mrs. Norris.

Madam,

Office of National Education,
4 January 1864.

WE are directed by the Commissioners of National Education to inform you, that they have read, with great respect, the letter addressed to them by you, on the 21st ultimo, requesting that a grant of the public money may be made by this Board for the maintenance of a Training Establishment for female teachers, in connexion with the Convent in Baggot Street, of which you are the Superior.

And to state that it is entirely out of the power of the Commissioners to comply with your request.

We have, &c.
(signed) *James Kelly,*
William M^cCreedy,
Secretaries.

Mrs. Norris,
Convent, Lower Baggot Street.

CONVENT SCHOOLS (IRELAND).

COPIES of a REPORT made to the Board of National Education, on the subject of CONVENT SCHOOLS in Ireland, by Inspector Sheridan; and, of a LETTER or MEMORIAL to the Board of National Education, from Baggot Street Convent School, Dublin, applying for Payment for TRAINING TEACHERS; and of the ANSWER of the Board *therein*.

(*Sir Hugh Cairns.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
6 April 1864.

[*Price 6 d.*]